

RIVERWOODS

Part 1 - about you

Lead organisation
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Other partners (optional)
Northern Corridor Community Volunteers

Part 2 - about your project

Project name
Bothlin Burn Restoration and Climate Resilience Project

Project description in a nutshell (this is the same as what you have entered into Consul) [1000 characters max]
<p>Why our rivers? The race to climate resilience, protecting our communities from climate breakdown, will be won or lost on rivers – and right now we're losing.</p> <p>Damage to river systems has been so extensive that an urgent need has emerged, not only to conserve, but to restore these systems. Our degraded rivers are less able to cope with the rain we expect in the future, making flooding more likely to impact communities. River and riparian habitat restoration is an important measure to mitigate against these effects. Heavily modified rivers are often less resilient and have lost their ability to hold water in both droughts and floods.</p> <p>Rivers are the veins of the Earth, transporting the water and nutrients needed to support the planet's ecosystems, including human life. Unfortunately, they're still threatened.</p> <p>We must commit to recovering freshwater biodiversity, restoring natural river flows and cleaning up polluted water for people and nature to thrive.</p> <p>Fish, amphibians, birds, insects, and invertebrates live in rivers, or find their food there. Rivers play a vital role in connecting habitats, and their value to plants and animals extends far beyond the surface area they cover.</p> <p>Carbon starts its journey downstream when natural acid rain (which contains dissolved carbon dioxide from the atmosphere) dissolves minerals in rocks. This neutralises the acid and transforms carbon dioxide to bicarbonate in the water that then flows in our rivers. Bicarbonate can remain in water for thousands of years. (BBC)</p> <p>Why Our River? The Bothlin burn as it runs through the ancient woodland of the Moodiesburn Glen which serves the communities of Moodiesburn and Chryston is a significant tributary to the Luggie water and thereafter the Clyde, restoring the river and riparian environment here has the capacity to bring multiple wins in terms of biodiversity, community wellbeing, climate resilience, active travel, combatting health inequalities, improving community cohesion and restoration of fish populations. The burn being a positive contribution to the local environment rather than a polluted detrimental hazard is incredibly important to the surrounding communities who have experienced an overwhelming loss of local greenspace which is essential to combat systemic health inequalities.</p>

1. Technical feasibility

What is your overall approach going to be for getting the skills and expertise you need, and deploying these towards the restoration of river woodlands?

[200 words max]

We believe in building the skills of local people to be stewards of their local environment, through working in partnership with the experts embedded in the statutory and third sector. For us the success of any project is primarily dependent on the support of the local community, with 10,000 people relying on this vital greenspace and concerned about the practices that have been allowed to contribute to its degradation, we also hope that skills will emerge from a newly engaged community, turning their negative experiences of development into a positive and inclusive community led improvement project. We have some in house skills and have been creating new woodland, removing INNS and improving local greenspaces for the last four years, alongside leading on climate action and biodiversity projects through third sector networks. The reason this project is needed is that infrastructure and investment in North Lanarkshire is rarely seen in the Northern Corridor communities as they have no town centre, this project can bring focus as much as skills, and with resource, potential partners who could bring massive intelligence to the project in terms of good practice can join with local experts and citizen scientists to form the perfect project team.

2. Commercial potential

Have you started thinking about the benefits your project will deliver and who the potential beneficiaries would be? We would be interested to hear about any early thinking you've done about the benefits (such as natural flood management) and which of these could have a monetary value to any of the beneficiaries. This is the starting point for building a business model.

[200 words max]

The project delivers several wins which intersect to combat the climate emergency and improve community wellbeing.

- Connecting Communities
- Improving Greenspace
- Encouraging Active Travel
- Restoring Fish
- Capturing Carbon
- Providing Climate Resilience
- Community Education

We have campaigned for a number of years to have carbon and biodiversity contributions from impactful local developments to be a consideration in planning permission. We believe that until we do get a win on this, careless developers and should be made to compensate for the pollution they cause and we will continue to address them directly. We know the beneficiaries well and the benefits, but further than this we hope support through this project would help us develop a financial model.

3. Engagement with community

What kind of engagement or plans to engage do you have with communities that will benefit or be affected by your project?

[200 words max]

We are a community led organisation and have been working closely with the community in Moodiesburn and Chryston for the past four years, undertaking placemaking work alongside our youth work, climate action and community resilience projects. We speak to a great many residents every day and this application is based around the passions of the local residents for their woodland, their active travel paths and their burn. Currently we are working with residents directly around the burn volunteering on small scale improvements and we would hope to broaden this to the wider community regularly coming together to volunteer to improve their precious green space.

4. Partnership potential

What kind of organisations are you planning to team up with to get your project underway?

[200 words max]

We work regularly with the local primary schools and uniformed youth groups, the local youth club and youth voice group, the Seven Lochs Wetland Partnership, parent councils, community councils, faith groups, the community forum, community board, and local authority officers, we would like to bring into the partnership SEPA and the Clyde River Foundation.

5. Level of public and environmental benefit

To what extent is your project going to be about creating wider public or environmental benefit?

[200 words max]

When I started working on the Clyde in 2002, I asked the then Senior Biologist at the Clyde River Purification Board where the Foundations fish survey work could be targeted to generate most benefit. His answer was the Bothlin Burn, which was generally regarded as the poorest quality river in the entire Clyde catchment. We had a look and it was indeed a bit mucky - sanitary litter hanging from the bank side bushes, etc. In about 2003, we found a tatty salmon parr just upstream of the junction with the Luggie and that was big news. Over the years we've surveyed here and there and, while there are fish over the length of the Bothlin Burn, they are not the trout we use to indicate good water quality in our catchment, rather three-spined sticklebacks, which are a bit more pollution-tolerant. The sad fact is that water quality in the Bothlin probably isn't much better than it was 20 years ago. The fish populations certainly have a long way to recover. We should perhaps be asking ourselves what's the bigger disgrace, the recent pollution incident which destroyed what little amenity there is left in the lower Bothlin, or the fact that the river is generally in such a poor state that there wasn't a trout to kill in the burn when it happened?
Clyde River Foundation
28 July 2021

The natural benefits outlined above sit alongside benefits of woodland improvement, removal of INNS, preventing Himayan Balsam from travelling upstream to vital SSI's such as Bishops Loch.

The public benefits have the potential to change lives, our communities have been disconnected by motorways, impacted by rapid growth in private housing as the Glasgow commuter belt expands with no infrastructure or jobs being delivered alongside and a substantial loss of local greenspace, the prevalence of deprivation and health inequalities in Moodiesburn begs local investment and community resilience to combat the anticipated impacts

6. Right intervention in the right place

What steps are you planning to take to make sure your intervention is ecologically suitable for the location?

[200 words max]

The intervention is based on restoration rather than creating something new, we know the indicator plants for healthy riparian habitat and we know what shouldn't be there ie himalayan balsam and american skunk cabbage, bits of sausage skin and fat, Mink toilet waste, lawn mowers, silt from developer run off and highway signage and herring fencing. We also know what should be there Trout, otters, water voles, a diversity of bird and insect life, particularly kingfishers, and dippers.

7. Additionality to statutory responsibilities

To what extent is this initiative going to deliver beyond what you would be expected to be delivering anyway? (For public agencies)

[200 words max]

We are a community led organisation and deliver what is expected of us as humans, mainly in an unpaid role.

Part 3 - uploading this form to CONSUL

1. Save your form in PDF
2. Label your form <project name - date>
3. Upload your labelled PDF to CONSUL platform
4. Check the platform regularly for questions people may have about your project proposal
5. Keep an eye out for updates from us along the way

Need help?

Contact riverwoodspioneers@demsoc.org