

# Rivers & Lochs Institute



*Supporting the sustainable management of Scotland's freshwater biodiversity*

Newsletter

Issue 1 Summer 2012

## Why this matters

*Economic activity, aquaculture, renewable power generation, recreational angling and other water sports mean that rivers and lochs are vitally important to Scotland's economy.*



## Who we are

*We are a network of environmental scientists and academics working as part of UHI a young dynamic expanding institution serving the people of Scotland.*



## What we do

*Support the economic and social well being of local communities particularly in the Highlands and Islands.*



## Where we do it

*Based at Inverness College UHI and working with fisheries biologists across the Highlands and Islands and the rest of Scotland.*



## Partnership working

*We thrive on partnership working, shared resources and pooling of skills.*



## The future

*Ensuring a healthy environment for Scotland's freshwater resources.*

## Why this matters

Our freshwater resource is a vital ecosystem service, providing for the essential needs of a diverse and complex range of users encompassing people and wildlife. Scotland's rivers and lochs are part of its iconic international image and the basis of economic and social wellbeing of local communities, particularly in the Highlands. Sustainable management of Scotland's freshwaters is central to the European and national legislation that governs the use and exploitation of this vital resource. However, there is ever increasing pressure on freshwater and particularly the unique and diverse wildlife found in rivers and lochs. Salmon and trout are flagship species for Scotland, capturing the spirit and culture of wilderness, and a key component of the biodiversity of freshwater. For species like these to survive and thrive requires the entire water based ecosystem to be working effectively and to be managed sustainably in the face of increasing exploitation.

We need to have a much better understanding of the nature and extent of the biodiversity in rivers and lochs to support the sustainable management of our freshwater resource. By working with the public and private sectors, the Rivers and Lochs Institute will provide research and training to build a comprehensive understanding of the nature and extent of freshwater biodiversity in rivers and lochs in Scotland thus significantly contributing to sustainable management

## Who we are

Initial funding has been secured for a Director of Research position to lead the formation of the **RLI**. Professor Eric Verspoor, an internationally renowned salmon geneticist previously with the Marine Scotland Science, Freshwater Laboratory, has been recruited to lead the development of the **RLI**. He is internationally recognised for his expertise in salmonid biodiversity management and was lead editor and author of the seminal book *Atlantic salmon: genetics, conservation and management*. With the Rivers and Fisheries Trusts Scotland, he developed and helped to deliver FASMOP (Focussing Atlantic Salmon Management on Populations), a programme which exploits advances in molecular genetics to catalogue Atlantic salmon biodiversity and inform conservation and management. This has resulted in Scotland's emerging reputation as a world leader in this field (<http://www.rafts.org.uk/genetic-studies-on-salmon-fasmop>). As part of his new role, Eric will work with Bob Kindness and Jonah Tosney on the River Carron Restoration Project [www.rivercarron.org.uk](http://www.rivercarron.org.uk).



## What we do

Currently the primary focus is to develop the research and work with fisheries trusts and boards. Ultimately the aim is for the RLI to encompass research into all biodiversity of freshwater lochs and rivers in Scotland.

In support of this, a central objective is to establish a state of the art molecular genetics laboratory facility. Funding is being sought from a range of private and public sector sources to establish a Chair in Freshwater Biodiversity Management, together with support staff and laboratory equipment to realise this unique vision.





# A healthy future for Scotland's freshwater resources

*Working in partnership across Scotland for Scotland's communities*

## Where we do it



Inverness College UHI is part of the University of the Highlands & Islands which is a partnership of 13 academic and further education establishments in the Highland Area - amongst them the Scottish Association of Marine Science (SAMS) and the Environment Research Institute in Thurso.

The College has 8000 students and offers 30 degree programmes through the UHI network, several of them in the environmental sciences area.

The organisation has a long standing relationship with the aquaculture industry and with wild fisheries management and is developing a new state of the art campus at Inverness which will be completed in 2015.

The RIVERS and LOCHS INSTITUTE will move into the new research and enterprise facility which will be part of this new campus. UHI is a young, dynamic, and expanding institution with a strong track record of serving the people of the region and Scotland as a whole, and of collaboration with other academic organisations, in the UK and in Europe and Scandinavia.



## Partnership working



Based centrally in the Highlands and Islands, the Institute will be uniquely placed to work with local rivers trusts, fisheries boards, landowners, industry and the public sector to provide scientific support to managers to protect and conserve biodiversity conservation and ensure its exploitation is sustainable. In doing so, it will be a major contributor to the Government's objective of a greener, healthier and wealthier Scotland.

### For further information contact:

Dr Melanie Smith  
 Head of Research Development  
 Inverness College  
 University of the Highlands and Islands  
 3 Longman Road, Inverness IV1 1SA  
 01463 273080



## The future - key aims



- To establish partnerships at local, regional, national and international levels to develop integrated, multidisciplinary research projects to more rapidly advance understanding of Scottish freshwater ecosystems
- To research the nature and extent of freshwater biodiversity in lochs and rivers in Scotland in support of meeting national and European conservation obligations
- Through science, to support the management of freshwater biodiversity in Scotland and sustainable economic development in respect of fisheries, aquaculture, renewable energy, and integrated land use
- To establish research focused post-graduate training and education in freshwater biodiversity conservation and management
- To be instrumental in developing the environment for high quality post-graduate employment opportunities in the Highland and Islands region

