

Integrated Land Use Conference 2023



'Building Resilience through Land Management'

Final report

April 2023

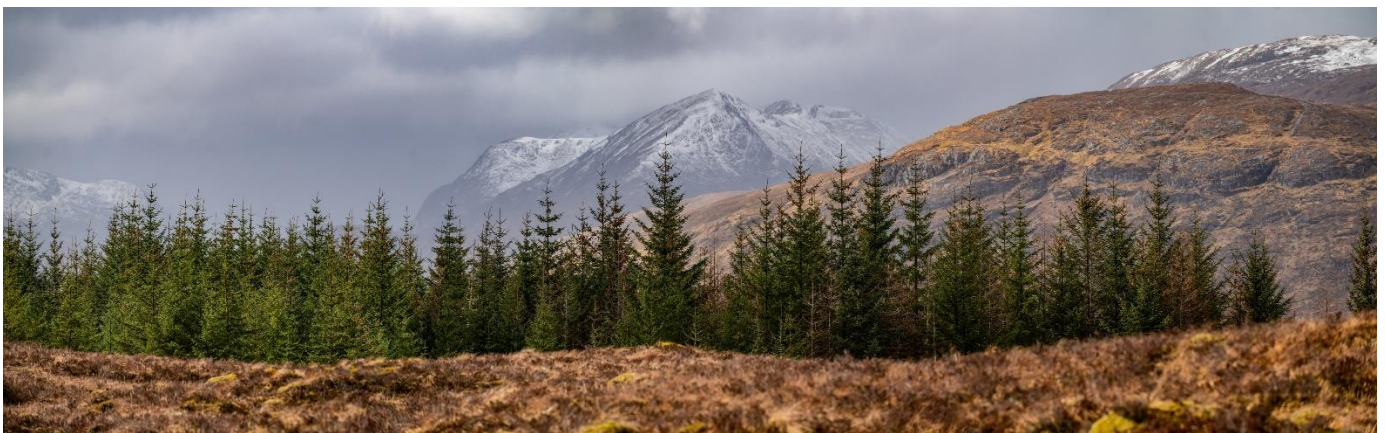
Table of Contents

Background	3
Attendance.....	4
Location / facilities	5
Event itself	6
What is next?	10

Background

The Integrated Land Use Conference began in 2012 with the aim to bring together our land use-based students from across the Highlands and Islands to both meet and learn from one another. This was initiated in response to concerns from industry about the breadth of focus of land managers.

Three types of activity operate together to provide students with a comprehensive experience including field talks with interactive and practical elements, conference style talks, and student-led group tasks that run throughout the event, addressing specific integrated land use issues. This event also provides a forum for students to talk to industry professionals and learn about potential career opportunities. This year's conference took place on 22nd and 23rd March at the Dundreggan Rewilding Centre. It was the 10th anniversary of the conference, and the theme was *Building Resilience through Land Management*.



Attendance

A total of 25 students attended the event. They were from various courses:

- Forestry - 6
- Environmental Science - 6
- Game & Wildlife Management - 3
- Sustainable Mountain Development - 3
- Net Zero Communities - 1
- Archaeology & Environmental Studies - 2
- Renewable Energy Systems - 1
- Applied Science – 1
- Geography - 1
- ESOL - 1

An extra 14 delegates were present, including planning group members, UHI staff members and a group from Scottish Forestry.

We had 4 field sessions led by:

- Peatland – Chris Marshall from ERI
- Mycology – David Satori from Rewilding Mycology
- Glengarry Community Woodland – Tom Cooper
- Dundreggan & Wildlife Management – Kat Murphy for Trees for Life and Stewart Blair from UHI North Highland

We had 2 poster presenters from SSEN Transmission and the following 7 speakers:

- Col Gordon from Inchindown Farm
- Claudia Rowse from NatureScot
- Richard Lockett from Knockbain Farm, Dingwall and Locket Agri Environment
- Michael Wann from SEPA
- William Hawes from Sylvestris
- Mark Mulqueeny and Jade O’Hara from SSE Renewables



Location / facilities

This year the event took place at the newly built Dundreggan Rewilding Centre. They have an accommodation building of 20 twin rooms (total of 40 beds) that was used by the students and some UHI staff. Three UHI staff members stayed in the Lodge building. They also have a main visitor centre that hosted the conference and meals on the 2 days. The 2 buildings are new, modern and as eco-friendly as possible with air source heat pumps, triple glazing and solar panels. It is located 6.3 miles (10.2km) from Invermoriston where the local hotel/pub is and 12.6 miles (20.3km) from the closest shop.

All the necessary equipment/facilities were available for a smooth running of the conference (laptop, large screen, wi-fi connection, tables chairs, catering, large spaces for group discussion/activities).

➤ Feedback

Were you aware of the Rewilding Centre prior to attending the Conference?

74% Yes
26% No

Would you return to visit the Rewilding Centre as part of a leisure visit?

92% Yes
8% Don't know

- ✓ 'Enjoyed the location and variety of interesting field trips on the first day the most. The rewilding centre was a very beautiful building and an excellent space to spend time/congregate and discuss things with fellow students.'
- ✓ 'I thought the venue, food, and staff were fantastic. The vegetarian options were excellent! The accommodation was very nice and had a very good atmosphere due to its design. The attention to detail and care that has gone into the whole place can be felt.'



Event itself

All 4 field sessions took place, although we had to re-locate the field site for the peatland session as the original one had been deemed too exposed given the inclement weather on the day. All planned speakers were present and delivered their talk. The final workshop on day 2 had to be cancelled due to the fact that the main presenter went to the wrong location, they went to Findhorn Trees for Life Headquarter.

➤ Feedback

How would you rate the preparation and administration of the conference?

73% Excellent

19% Good

8% Fair

How would you judge the duration of the conference?

85% Adequate

15% Too short

How would you rate the cost vs. value of the event?

78% Inexpensive for what we get

22% Adequate

How would you rate the effectiveness of the student activities?

27% Excellent

50% Good

23% Fair

- ✓ Great range of activities on a diverse number of important topics suitable location as well, being such a central locus of ecological work in Scotland friendly staff and students.'
- ✓ 'It was great to be included in the discussions The evening entertainment was great and really brought people together.'
- ✓ 'The setting and the ability to talk with others of similar interests and learn about their experiences.'
- ✓ 'It was really wonderful to interact with and learn from other students from different disciplinarians and have the opportunity to interact with teachers and professionals that are not specific to my studies. The speakers were varied and hugely informative.'









What is next?

- The registration process could be streamlined to reduce the number of steps.
- The closing date could be moved forward to be at least 4 weeks before the event to allow all the communication and adjustment to be made smoothly in a timely manner.
- Maybe we should consider advertising the conference to a wider student audience, not just to UHI students to allow them to discuss about the different approaches to land management from different parts of the UK.

Regarding the conference's budget, we will have a healthy bank balance to start with. This is due to recent conference costs having been lower in the last three years because of one event being cancelled with Covid and two events having been held online. Therefore, we started 2023 with a very healthy bank balance. In addition, this year has been relatively low-cost (£4,268) with less students attending due to location's capacity and having had the conference running over 2 days and only 1 night, compared to the 3 days and 2 nights in the previous years. The conference account is in credit of £7,187.

Suggested timeline for next year's event if going ahead:

- End August / early September 2023: venue and theme must be confirmed
- September 2023: submit engagement bid form for HRH Princess Royal
- September/October/November 2023: scheduling and inviting speakers
- w/c 20th November 2023: marketing 'keep the date' campaign
- w/c 22nd January 2024: registration open with marketing campaign
- February 2024: marketing activities and reminders
- w/c 19th February 2024: registration close
- w/c 25th March 2024: ILUC24 event

- Feedback

Which theme would you like the conference to cover next year?

- careers, soil ecology and restoration
- justice
- integration of multiple land uses
- community ownership/management/food systems
- rewilding
- community food systems
- deer management.
- working together between professions and/or land owners
- Land Management in the 21st Century
- Predator and herbivore reintroductions and how they can regenerate ecosystems
- how the future could look / what's been done in terms of future planning for preservation of land and communities.
- Public engagement
- Freshwater
- Regulation/land reform, who benefits who loses
- Sustainable Development



Thank you all