

Join us in Scotland to visit Rottal Burn in the South Esk Catchment. Rottal Burn was re-meandered in 2012. During the project 1200m of new channel plus backwaters was created, connection to wetlands was established, and 2000 native trees were planted. Ten years on we will hear about this ambitious project that won the 2023 UK River Prize, for the 'reach-scale award'.





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Rivers & Fisheries Trust

## The Project

The Rottal Burn is a tributary of the River South Esk in Glen Clova, Eastern Scotland, with headwaters in Cairngorms National Park. The project described here is an unconfined re-meandering of the lower part of the burn from where it flows under the B955 road bridge around 1km southwest of Rottal Lodge to the confluence with the River South Esk.



The lower burn was straightened around the 1830s for agricultural reasons and was subjected to regular dredging. While salmon and trout continued to spawn in the straightened section of river, survival of juvenile fish was poor, and salmonid nests, called 'redds' were frequently washed-out during winter floods.

To restore the Rottal Burn, a new channel was created in 2012, replacing 650m of straightened, embankment-lined channel with an open, meandering channel extended to 1200m in length and now connected to its floodplain. The restoration design was process-based rather than focusing on creating individual habitat features.

Trees were planted in 2012 along much of the new channel in 2012, using native broadleaf and pine trees. The riparian zone of the new channel has not been used by grazing by the estate, and there has been significant natural regeneration, mainly alder, in the area.

The restoration aimed to restore natural river processes and in-stream and riparian habitat, particularly for the Atlantic salmon, trout, and freshwat er pearl mussel. The unconfined restoration did not 'lock' the channel in place, it was expected that it would remain active and change naturally over time, developing gravel bars, pools and local bank erosion. The freedom to evolve has resulted in improvements in terrestrial habitats such as wetlands, riverbank habitat e.g. sand martin nesting opportunities and shingle islands. The botanical interest of the site has increased greatly, and invertebrate/pollinators are anecdotal greater in number. The project continues to evolve, and ecological monitoring of these wider terrestrial species is planned.

## Information

This site visit is **FREE to RRC members** (£10 deposit to be refunded following attendance at site visit). If space is available, non-members are welcome to attend at a cost of £30. Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. To book a place please complete a booking form at the <u>link here</u>. Booking closes when all spaces are allocated.

- The visit will start at 10:00 and end by 15:00. This will include time for a packed lunch (not supplied).
- Meeting point: Rottal Burn Angus, DD8 4QT. What3words: https://what3words.com/ketchup.informer.chip
- Walking boots or wellington boots and waterproof clothing are recommended as the walk will be on rough, uneven riverside banks. Please bring your own suncream, drinks and any refreshments you wish.
- Toilet facilities are available

Watch the project video

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