



Aviemore River Access Point Restoration and Enhancement Project Report

Summary

In partnership with the local community and others, the Spey Catchment Initiative carried out repair, stabilisation and enhancement of a popular but increasingly degraded access point on the River Spey. Natural materials and willow spiling were utilised to achieve a robust, sustainable solution, ensuring the area remains safe and attractive for all users in future.



The access point during construction works.

Background, Aims and Rationale

The site is the main access point to the River Spey from the village of Aviemore and has been heavily used for recreational access for many years. Over time the banks have been deteriorating, with a marked increase in the size and severity of the eroding 'beach' area in recent years, resulting in unstable, de-vegetated banks of bare sand and a widening ramp area. Canoe trailers being reversed right to the water's edge were regarded as being particularly damaging. In winter 2015/16 there were a series of particularly large spate events which exacerbated and accelerated the erosion processes.

There had been increasing concern particularly amongst both the local community and paddlers that if the problem was not addressed, the rate of damage from both human usage and high water would accelerate, making the area more unsafe, unsightly and degraded.

The aim of the project was to restore the river entry point and adjacent banks using green engineering techniques to create a safe and enhanced public amenity for use by paddlers and other recreational users. A 'green engineering' design was used, involving natural materials where possible and utilising willow spiling for bank stabilisation. This was considered appropriate to ensure the long term sustainability of the works, create new wildlife habitat and result in a visually pleasing, low impact appearance which fitted well with the existing surroundings.

The project was delivered by the Spey Catchment Initiative (SCI) in the autumn of 2019, in partnership with Aviemore Community Enterprise Company (ACE). Funding was secured from the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund through Suez Communities Trust, with additional funding contributed by Reidhaven Estates (the landowner), Cairngorms National Park Authority and the Andy Jackson Memorial Fund. Other partners and consultees included the Spey Users Group, the Old Bridge Inn, local water sports providers, CNPA as the Access Authority, SEPA and the Spey Fishery Board.

A location map and photos of the sites before and after construction are appended.

Groundworks

Design and construction was undertaken by MNV Consulting Ltd.

Untreated larch timbers were installed to form terraces on either side of the ramp to stabilise the banks and prevent further widening. Geotextile was laid on the terraces followed by aggregate, topsoil and grass seed. Once grassed over the terraces will be suitable for use by paddlers and the public as informal seating and play areas. Willow spiling was installed at the river end of the terraces to provide natural protection as the roots take hold and bind the sandy soil, reducing erosion due to river flow and human footfall. Three timber steps were constructed on the ramp and backfilled with compacted aggregate over geotextile to provide a robust, reinforced surface for boat launching. Posts were installed at the top of the ramp to prevent trailers reversing down, but still allow easy access for boat launching and recovery.

Interpretation

An interpretation board giving information about the natural and cultural heritage of the River Spey, the access point project and responsible use of the river was designed and manufactured by Osprey Signs Ltd. It was installed adjacent to the access point. Life-saving equipment was also installed.



Monitoring and maintenance

The works were designed to be low maintenance. However the site will be regularly inspected and any necessary maintenance carried out by SCI staff, ACE volunteers and Spey Fishery Board staff.

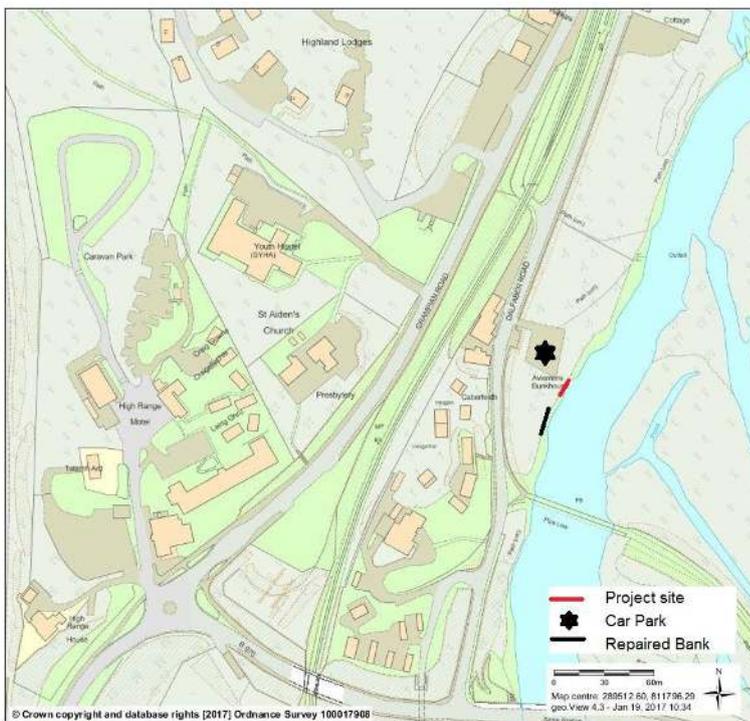
Before works (September 2019)



After works (December 2019)



Location and site plan



© Crown copyright and database rights [2017] Ordnance Survey 100017968
 © Scottish Natural Heritage, © Scottish Office, © Scottish Executive, © General Register Office (Scotland),
 © Scottish Rights of Way Society, © Forest Enterprise, © Forestry Commission, SSNW © Highland Birchwoods.
 Some features of this map are based on digital spatial data licensed from the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
 © NERC (CEH) Defra and Met Office
 © Crown Copyright, © The James Hutton Institute, Ordnance Survey

Scottish Natural Heritage
 Dualchas Nàdar na h-Alba