THE FLOW COUNTRY

FLOWS TO THE FUTURE PROJECT

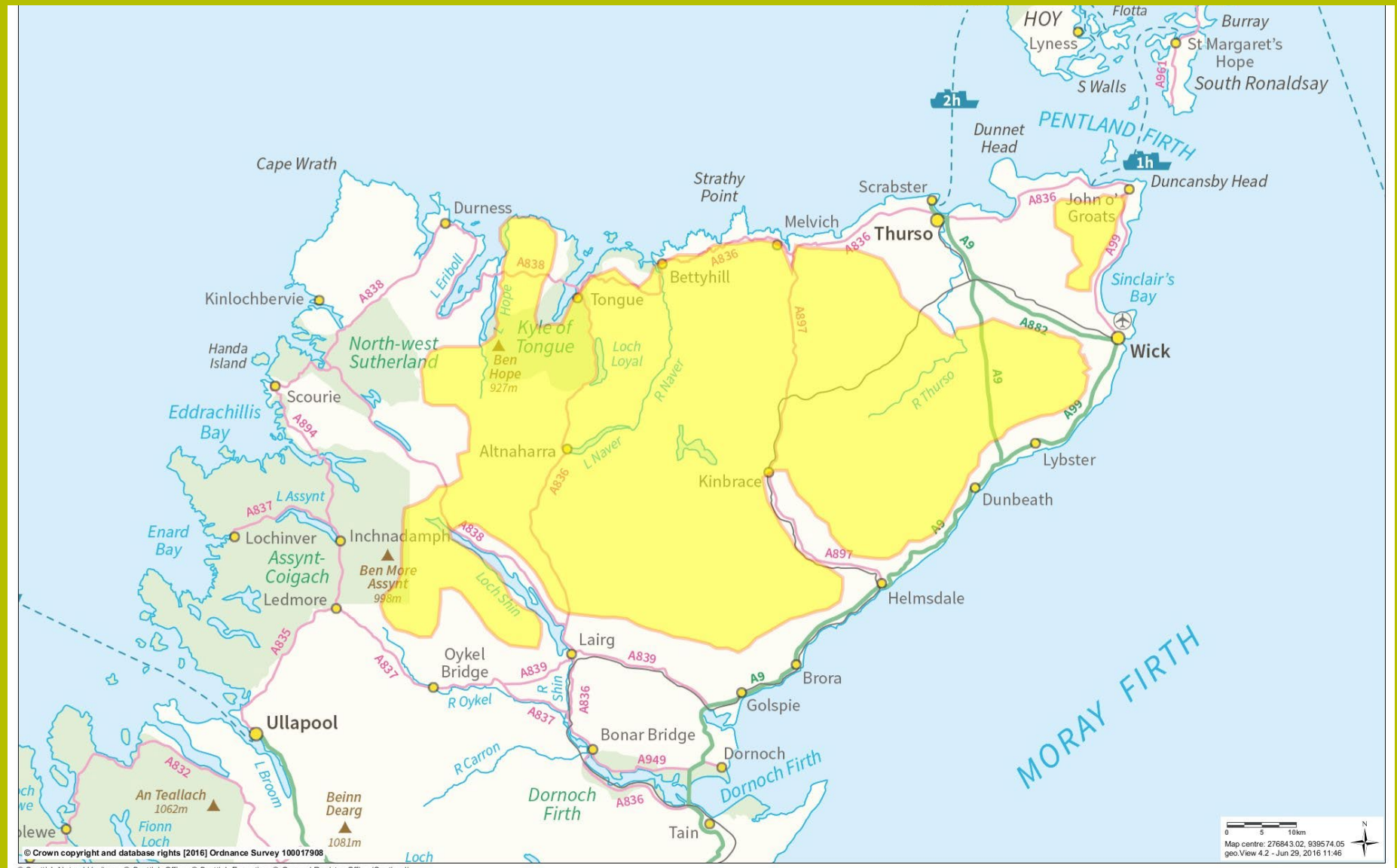
LOTTERY FUNDED

heritage lottery fund

THE FLOW COUNTRY

THE PEATLANDS PARTNERSHIP

Main peatland areas with “classic” Flow Country landscape/ habitats



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Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba




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A maze of light

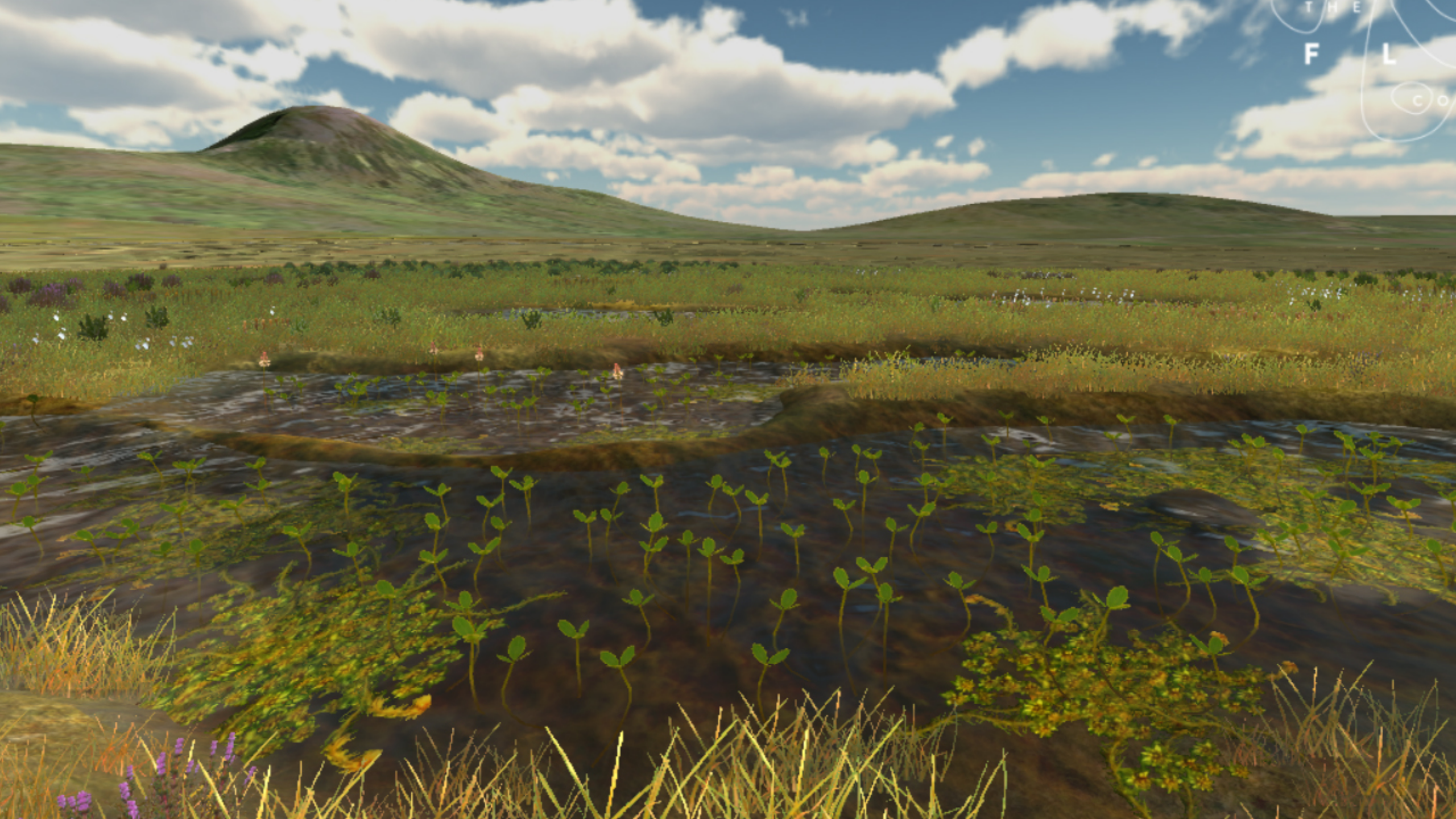
This mosaic of water and plants is a classic example of a bog pool system, the Flow Country's most distinctive feature. Pool systems mostly form on deep peat, and they create vital homes for insects and birds. The pattern of water and plants changes gradually as large pools divide, or smaller ones join together. And if you look closely, you might see how pools next to each other can be at different levels – the walls of moss and peat between them act like miniature dams.

Although the Gaelic name *dubh-lochain* means 'black pools', the pool systems often splash the land with light. Climb the Flows lookout for an even better view.




of the land
Peat protects us against climate change
The plant matter that forms the bog doesn't fully decay, so peat stores carbon just as coal and oil do. Carbon is one of the most important elements affecting the world's climate, so peatlands are vitally important in controlling climate change. We need to keep the carbon they contain locked up in the peat. To do that, we need to keep the bogs wet.
3%
30%
x 2
Where are the trees?
Apart from a brief period about 4,500 years ago, when the climate was drier and warmer, native trees have always been scattered thinly around the Flow Country.
Conservation battleground
Peace in the peatlands
No place like home
The plants and animals that live in the Flow Country are well suited to its conditions – and to the vast expanse of land where they can feed, breed and shelter undisturbed. If the bogs are damaged or shrink because of climate change, many of


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3%
Peatland covers just 3% of the earth's surface...
30%
...it contains over 30% of all the organic carbon on the planet...
x 2
... that's more than twice the carbon in all the world's trees!
If a bog dries out, for example because it's drained for agriculture or forestry, or because the moss stops growing because of climate change, the peat starts to decay. The carbon it holds is released into the air and into streams and rivers, with potentially disastrous effects.
In the past, peat was the area's main source of fuel. Every family needed a stock of peats for the winter, and that involved hours of work cutting blocks of wet peat, leaving them in neat stacks to dry, then carrying them back to the township later in the year. You can see more peat cutting tools at Strathnaver Museum, and the Castlehill Heritage Centre has some wonderful baskets used to carry the peats. Many people now use electricity or oil, but you can still smell peat smoke here and there.
The flauchter is used to remove the top turf to allow the peat underneath to be cut.
Image: Strathnaver Museum
The razor-sharp flauchter (pronounced flah-ter) is pushed hard from the thighs and scoops off the top turf. This is usually a job for the strongest in the family and the flauchter's curved stem has to fit him perfectly. Other tools have been developed over hundreds of years, each with at specific job such as marking the ground or cutting the distinctive slabs that we call 'a peat' for stacking and drying.
People of the peatlands
Peatland doesn't make good farmland. But people have lived here for thousands of years, growing crops in the more fertile ground of the straths, taking cattle and sheep to graze on the rough peatland, and fishing in the rivers and sea.
Until the 19th century, this landscape supported many more people than live here now. You can find the ruins of abandoned houses and townships (small groups of cottages) at places like Rosal. The people who called these places home had to leave when landowners decided to use the land for large-scale sheep farming. The Strathnaver Museum in Bettyhill tells the story of these cruel times.
THE FLOW COUNTRY
TOUCH TO START
400 million
A scientific challenge





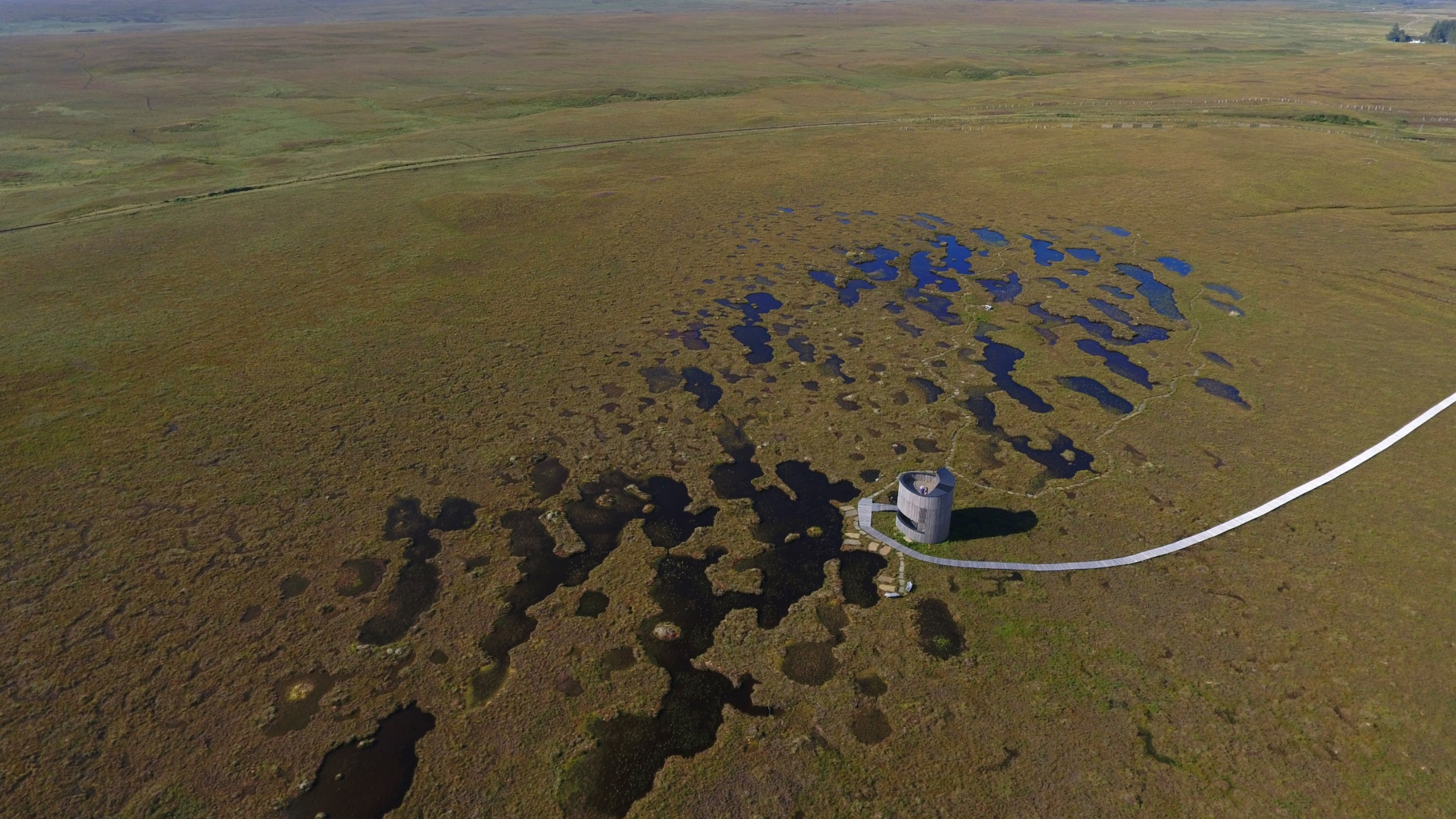



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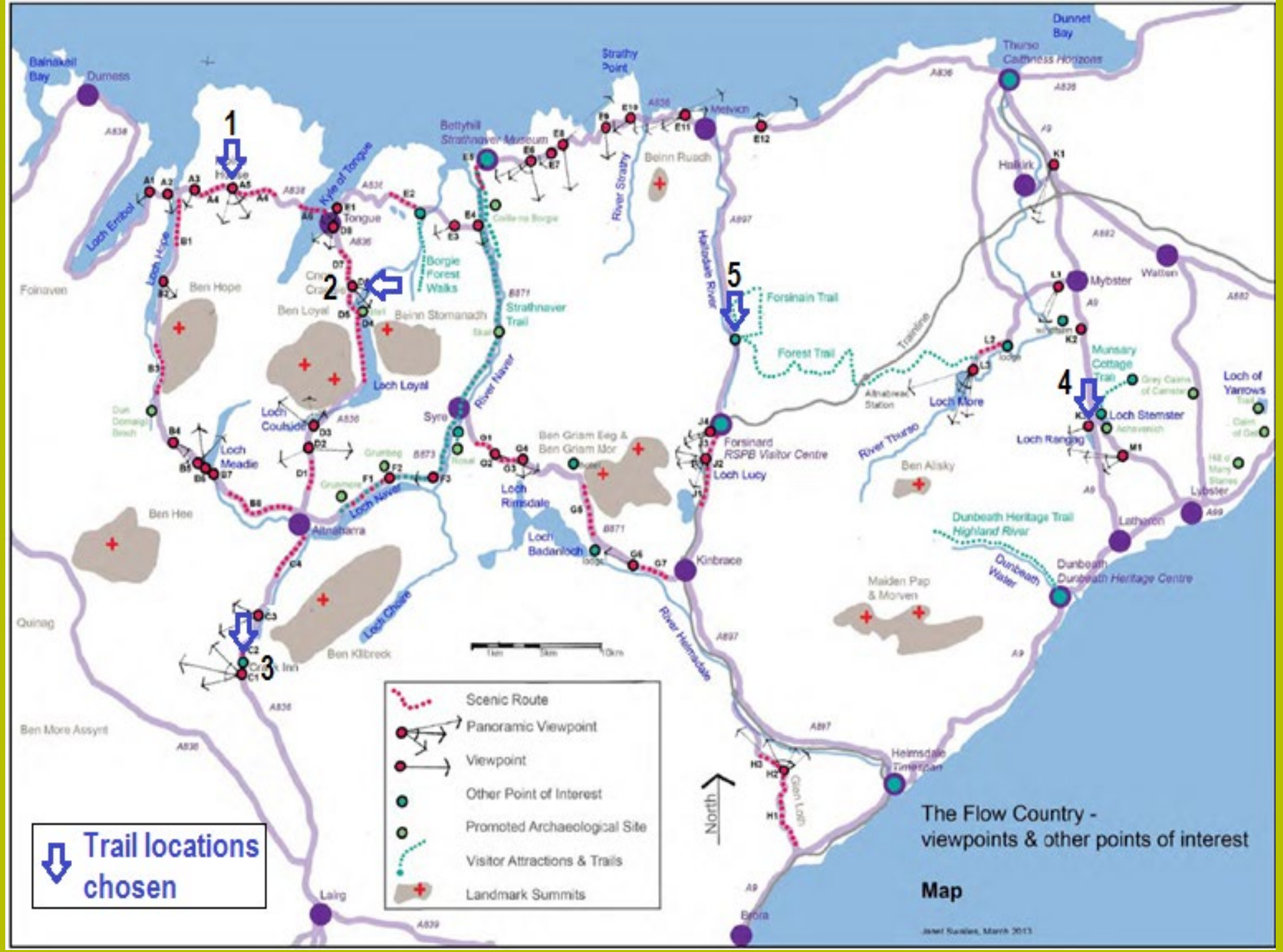



Me and nature






Country
y, but
you'll see
colours
fly over
zoom in
eople.
Explore for yourself
There are a number of roadside viewpoints with visitor interpretation dotted around the Flow Country, as well as a boardwalk leading to a bog pool system and a panoramic viewing tower at Forsinard.
In the RSPB Visitor Centre at Forsinard there's a fascinating exhibition on different aspects of the Flow Country, and you'll find a display on the area's peat-cutting heritage in Strathnaver Museum, in Bettyhill.
Pick up a Flow Country leaflet from the museum shop to find out more about places to explore in the area.
This display was created as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund supported Flows to the Future project, an ambitious scheme to restore extensive areas of bog and connect people everywhere with the wonders of the Flow Country. The Peatlands Partnership led the initiative, with a steering group of RSPB Scotland (lead partner), The Highland Council, Environmental Research Institute (North Highland College, University of the Highlands and Islands) and Scottish Natural Heritage.
LOTTERY FUNDED
Scotland
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Trail locations chosen
1
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4
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Scenic Route
Panoramic Viewpoint
Viewpoint
Other Point of Interest
Promoted Archaeological Site
Visitor Attractions & Trails
Landmark Summits
North
The Flow Country - viewpoints & other points of interest
Map
Janet Swailes, March 2013
Dunnet Bay
Thurso
Caithness Horizons
Strathy Point
Melvich
Bettyhill
Strathnaver Museum
Kyle of Tongue
Tongue
Loch Eriboll
Loch Hope
Ben Hope
Foinaven
Ben Loyal
Borgie Forest Walks
Strathnaver Trail
Beinn Stomarsadh
Beinn Ruadh
River Strathy
Halladale River
Loch Loyal
Loch Coulside
Loch Meadie
River Naver
Syre
Ben Griam Beg & Ben Griam Mor
Forsinard RSPB Visitor Centre
Loch Lucy
Loch Rimsdale
Loch Badanloch
Altnaharra
Loch Naver
Ben Hee
Kinbrace
Loch Choire
Ben Klibreck
Quinag
Ben More Assynt
Laing
Forsinain Trail
Forest Trail
Mybster
Halkirk
Watten
Munsary Cottage Trail
Loch Stemster
Loch Ranagill
Loch More
Altnabreac Station
Ben Alisky
River Thurso
Loch of Yarrows
Lybster
Latheron
Dunbeath Heritage Trail
Highland River
Dunbeath
Dunbeath Heritage Centre
Dunbeath Water
Maiden Pap & Morven
River Helmsdale
Helmsdale
Glen Loth
Brora
A836
A897
A9
A882
B871
B873







CNOC CRAGGIE VIEWPOINT PROPOSAL

THE FLOW COUNTRY

