



Riverwoods

Media and Communications Protocol

Purpose

Communications will play a central role in the development and delivery of Riverwoods. Through our communications, we must establish the brand and identity of Riverwoods, highlight our key messages and engage with a wide range of stakeholders.

In our communications, we must ensure that:

- There is **consistency** across partnership organisations in how the initiative is described and branded.
- There is **clarity** in what is and is not included in the remit of the initiative.
- There is an **acknowledgment** of the partnership nature of the initiative.

Riverwoods: Definitions & Terms

Riverwoods is both the name of the initiative that is the umbrella of multiple project streams and also the woodland habitat we are seeking to achieve. Thus, there is potential for confusion that must be overcome through considered use of definitions and terms.

Riverwoods: the initiative

Riverwoods as an initiative is a wide partnership of organisations united behind a common vision:

Vision Statement:

A network of river woodland and healthy, resilient river systems throughout Scotland delivering a range of environmental, socio-economic and financial benefits.

Riverwoods aims to connect ongoing projects that are restoring and reconnecting river woodlands throughout Scotland. The purpose of developing a network of projects under the Riverwoods brand is to facilitate collaboration, collective ownership and responsibility, and effective knowledge-sharing around best practices. The goal of Riverwoods is to act as a catalyst for wider uptake of Riverwoods projects and inspire greater support for the common vision.

When referring to the initiative, Riverwoods should:

- be a single word – **not** River woods or River-woods
- have the first letter capitalised for Riverwoods, as it is a proper noun referring to a specific entity – **not** RiverWood or riverwoods,
- be referred to as an ‘initiative’ or ‘partnership initiative’ - **not** a project, as many individual projects will take place under the initiative (e.g. Riverwoods Blueprint Project).

River woodlands: the habitat

River woodlands have been defined by the Science Group as:

River woodlands include trees and woods in, next to and near rivers to the extent to which they influence and are influenced by river processes such as recycling nutrients, storing carbon, and regulating water flow. This includes instream, riparian, gorge, and floodplain woodlands and associated large wood material. A new and encompassing definition of river woodlands and associated large wood material. A new and encompassing definition of river woodlands has been adopted to take into consideration that functional processes within the waters of stream-river networks are closely interlinked to land and such influences can extend beyond the local riverbank to wider scales. This definition embraces a landscape approach for rivers.

When referring to the habitat:

- the term ‘river woodlands’ should be used to avoid confusion with the name of the initiative
- the term “riparian woodland” should be avoided except in special technical circumstances, for example, referring to specific policy lines or promote the work of the Riparian Woodland Nature Champion

Riverwoods Identity, Logo & Brand

With a wide range of organisations, projects and third parties involved in river restoration in Scotland (including many outside the Riverwoods partnership), we have created a strong, simple and memorable brand that tie our activities together and which is easily identifiable.



Srapline:

Creating a network of biodiverse woodlands connected to healthy river systems across Scotland

Further details for brand and logo use can be found below and should be followed by all partners wherever possible.

For more information on branding terminology, placement, font, colour palettes please see [Riverwoods Brand Guidelines](#).

Use Case 1: Riverwoods Partners

For partners to use the logo on their website, in promotional material, and on social media, they must:

- Be a Riverwoods partner (organisations who have agreed to the terms as outlined in the Riverwoods Handbook) OR;
- Be a Riverwoods Project Partner (e.g. Blueprint Project Delivery Partner)

This welcomes partners to use the Riverwoods logo in the following circumstances:

- To accompany text describing their involvement in Riverwoods
- AND/OR within a list of other initiatives in which they are involved

Further conditions

- The Riverwoods logo must not be used for purposes other than those directly relating to the initiative, without prior written agreement from the Scottish Wildlife Trust.
- Being a Riverwoods partner alone does not permit site-specific projects to be branded as Riverwoods delivery projects.
- Email press releases may be sent without logos, as plain emails (without attachments), to prevent rejection by the recipient.

Use Case 2: Riverwoods Site Specific Projects

For site specific projects to be branded as Riverwoods projects, they must:

- Have one Riverwoods partner (organisations who have agreed to the terms as outlined in the Riverwoods Handbook) as a funder or delivery partner
 - Be either
 - a Riverwoods funded or delivered project (e.g. Riverwoods Blueprint Project Demonstration Areas, Riverwoods Investment Readiness Pioneers, Riverwoods Development Grant recipients, Shovel Ready Projects)
- or
- be put forward as Riverwoods showcase projects and approved by the Scottish Wildlife Trust as lead partner

Project or other delivery partners who are not official Riverwoods partners but are collaborating on a Riverwoods site specific project are permitted to use the logo in reference to that project only, under the guidance of the leading Riverwoods funding or delivery partner.

Sites that are using the Riverwoods brand must evidence best practice on any continued work that happen beyond the timeline of the funding contract with Riverwoods in order to maintain Riverwoods project status. Examples include but are not limited to recipients of the Development

Grant and Riverwoods Investment Readiness Pioneers moving into the delivery phase of their projects.

In the event that it is discovered that a Riverwoods project is not meeting statutory requirements or engaging in bad practice, they will be asked in writing to remove the use of the Riverwoods name and brand upon recommendation from the Strategic Advisory Group.

Partner Logos:

Partner logos may appear on their own promotional materials alongside the Riverwoods logo.

Given the dynamic and expanding nature of the partnership, it is advisable not to include all Riverwoods partner logos on promotional materials, as this can lead to rapid obsolescence.

In special circumstances where it is determined that the use of all partner logos will have a significant effect on the efficacy of the communications materials, a Riverwoods partner can request this use and obtain partner logos from the Riverwoods Communications and Advocacy Lead. However, the use of partner organisations' logos shall not be used under any circumstances for purposes other than those directly relating to Riverwoods and without prior agreement.

Funder Logos:

Riverwoods project streams must adhere to the requirements in acknowledging their grant funding as outlined by their funders. If there are multiple funders, funding logos should be given equal weight as secondary branding to the Riverwoods logo.

Objectives

Communications Objectives¹:

All Riverwoods communications activity aims to encourage target audiences to act in a way that enables us to meet the above initiative level objectives. In communications terms, this translates to:

1. Elevate public awareness of project successes, the importance of river woodlands and a landscape-scale approach to achieving river woodland restoration.
2. Establish Riverwoods as a base of knowledge by sharing insights, research, tools, and best practices
3. Empower Riverwoods partners to promote Riverwoods as a strong brand and credible partnership

Key Messages ²

The following have been identified as the overarching key messages of Riverwoods. Some key messages will evolve as the focus of Riverwoods shifts and new project streams come into focus. A

¹ The Communications Objectives will be reviewed in line with the Advisory Group objectives, which will be added to this Protocol once completed. For further information refer to the Riverwoods Handbook.

² Key messages are subject to change following the Advisory Group objective setting process and following further review from the Riverwoods Communications and Advocacy Lead.

yearly review of this document will update these message lines. It should be noted that these are not designed to be used verbatim and can be adapted to best suit the key audience being targeted.

General

G1: Restoring river woodlands is a nature-based solution to tackling the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change that will benefit people and wildlife.

G2: Riverwoods is an innovative partnership with a broad membership focused on ecosystem recovery. It aims to make a significant contribution to restoring the bank-side habitats of river systems; increasing the ecological connectivity between land and rivers; and delivering a Scottish Nature Network.

G3: Riverwoods work centres around four pillars of effective ecosystem restoration: science, delivery, advocacy and finance. Riverwoods brings together the findings discovered in the science group, the opportunities uncovered in the finance group, and the ground covered in the delivery group to push forward our collective vision. Key learnings and case studies will then be utilised to advocate for better policies and incentives for river woodland creation and restoration in Scotland.

G4: Riverwoods offers a distinct and collaborative approach to revitalising Scotland's river woodlands, allowing us to address challenges at a catchment or landscape level more effectively than ever before.

G5: By working together, we can garner increased public, political, and financial backing for the conservation of Scotland's river woodlands.

G6: A properly restored network of river woodlands would offer a multitude of benefits to people, communities and wildlife.

G7: Right now, the core of our partnership efforts are directed toward delivering the Blueprint Project, a five-year NLHF funded project which aims to develop a blueprint for river woodland restoration that will serve as a model, source of inspiration, and guiding resource.

Science

S1: In 2016, SEPA conducted a survey and found only 17% of Scotland's riverside habitat was in good condition. The rest is degraded with little or no tree cover. Given the important role of river woodlands in protecting Scotland's ecosystems, our current situation is highly concerning.

S2: River woodlands serve as guardians of water quality, champions against drought, and defenders against floods, while also storing carbon, sustaining soil life, countering diffuse pollution, and offering shading that reduces water temperatures, all fostering thriving biodiversity, including wild fish populations.

Finance

F1: Riverwoods will expand available funding for river woodland creation and explore investment finance and alternative finance models to bring the transformational change required to deliver its vision.

F2: A resource gap exists where public sector resources are insufficient in addressing the restoration needs and pace of our river woodlands. Restoring ecological function at a catchment scale requires innovation, collaboration, and a combination of public funding and private finance.

Delivery

D2: One of the primary objectives of Riverwoods is to act as a catalyst for the wider uptake of river creation and restoration projects.

Advocacy

A1: Restoring river woodland is crucial to achieving multiple Scottish government targets, including Nature Networks and 30 x 30 of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, and the Scottish Wild Salmon Strategy.

A2: A joint approach by the agricultural and environmental sectors is key to resolving river system health concerns, resulting in a shared benefit.

A3: The Riverwoods Advocacy Group is focused on optimizing public funding mechanisms to efficiently support large-scale river woodland restoration, including the Forestry Grant Scheme, Agri-Environment Schemes, and the Nature Restoration Fund.

A4: Recognizing the importance of active deer management, Riverwoods Advocacy Group encourages the Scottish Government to strengthen policy, regulation, and resource allocation to control herbivore browsing, supporting landscape-scale regeneration.

Principal Media Contacts

THE SCOTTISH WILDLIFE TRUST's press office in Edinburgh (with the Riverwoods Communications and Advocacy Lead) will act as the lead centre for preparing, clearing, and issuing Riverwoods branded press releases, in close liaison with all other partners. Any press releases referencing Riverwoods issued by individual partner organisations must be circulated to the below media contact(s) in advance. Where possible, these should be shared at least three working days in advance of planned release – see below for more details.

Riverwoods Communications and Advocacy Lead: Ruth Oxborrow, email: roxborrow@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

AND riverwoods@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

Media: Press, Publications, Display Materials, Articles, etc.

Partners are encouraged to publicise Riverwoods in their own in-house publications, blogs, magazines, and newsletters whenever possible. Riverwoods Communications and Advocacy Lead should be included in the distribution list.

Press releases, publications, articles, and display materials about any Riverwoods activity must be:

- Sent for comment to the Riverwoods Communications & Advocacy Lead at least three working days, preferably five working days, ahead of publication
- Requests for quotes will be given five days in advance of release where possible

Boiler Text

The following boiler text shall be placed on the footer of the last page of all Riverwoods documentation:

Riverwoods is a partnership initiative collaboratively working towards ecosystem recovery through the restoration and creation of river woodlands. Established in 2019, Riverwoods unites, supports, and delivers projects under the shared vision of a network of river woodland and healthy, resilient river systems throughout Scotland delivering a range of environmental, socio-economic, and financial benefits.

Crediting of Project Partners

Given the number of partners involved in Riverwoods, crediting all partners will not always be possible.

- Any printed materials (e.g. press releases, articles, displays or other promotional products) should include the Riverwoods logo, strapline, and if possible and practicable, include a link to the project partners page of the Riverwoods website.
- Verbal communications (e.g. media interviews, public talks) must give credit to Riverwoods and if possible, mention a wide range of project partners within reason and as circumstances permit.

Crediting of Project Funders

- There is currently no centralised funding requiring acknowledgement for Riverwoods. Projects operating under the Riverwoods brand (e.g. Riverwoods Blueprint Project) should adhere to project specific funder acknowledgement guidelines.

Notes to the Editors

In all Riverwoods press releases, the following minimum text should appear in the Notes to Editors:

- “Riverwoods is a partnership initiative collaboratively working towards ecosystem recovery through the restoration and creation of river woodlands. Established in 2019, Riverwoods unites, supports, and delivers projects under the shared vision of a network of river woodland and healthy, resilient river systems throughout Scotland delivering a range of environmental, socio-economic, and financial benefits. For more information visit riverwoods.org.uk”

Additional information might include:

- “River woodlands include trees and woods in, next to and near rivers to the extent to which they influence and are influenced by river processes such as recycling nutrients, storing carbon and regulating water flow. This includes instream, riparian, gorge and floodplain woodlands and associated large wood material. A new and encompassing definition of river woodlands has been adopted to take into consideration that functional processes within the waters of stream-river networks are closely interlinked to land and such influences can extend beyond the local riverbank to wider scales. This definition embraces a landscape approach for rivers.”

Press releases and publications will be broadcast to all partners via the Riverwoods Partner newsletter and on socials where possible, all Riverwoods partners are encouraged to share and distribute via their own channels.

Handling Queries/Media Contacts

- Depending on the nature of the query, the Riverwoods partnership should be made aware of any significant pro-active briefing of, or re-active contact with, the news media or other public relations contacts by individual partners concerning Riverwoods (ideally via e-mail) and advance notice given of the likely appearance of any articles, broadcasts, etc. arising.
- All partners will be responsible for ensuring that in any media briefings referring to Riverwoods, awareness is drawn to its partnership nature and the media contact given the opportunity to contact the Riverwoods Communications and Advocacy Lead and any other relevant partner organisations. Appropriate contact information for partner organisations can be found on Partnership Directory and Skills Register.

Media Crisis Procedure

In the event of a media crisis (e.g., misinformation, negative publicity), a predefined protocol will be followed:

- Immediate notification to the Riverwoods Communications and Advocacy Lead
- Coordinated response strategy developed by available SAG and relevant advisory group members within 48 hours of notification

Social Media

There are no centralised Riverwoods social media channels. Partners are encouraged to create and share content that aligns with the Riverwoods themes, such as river woodland restoration best practice, delivery and community engagement successes, and environmental impact. Content should be informative, engaging, visually appealing, and adhere to brand guidelines.

Hashtags and Handles:

All relevant social media posts should use the designated hashtag #Riverwoods for consistency and visibility. Additional frequently used hashtags include: #MakeRiversCool and #NatureBasedSolutions. In the absence of official Riverwoods social media handles, tagging relevant partner organisations where relevant in posts is encouraged to facilitate cross-promotion.

Frequency and Timing:

Regular posting is recommended to maintain engagement. Partners should aim for a consistent frequency, e.g. posting Riverwoods content monthly, and reposting at a minimum, depending on their capacity.

Joint Campaigns:

Periodically, coordinated social media campaigns may be organised. These campaigns will focus on specific themes or events related to Riverwoods, requiring synchronized posting from all partners.

Campaign Calendar:

A social media calendar will be maintained by the Riverwoods Communications and Advocacy Lead outlining upcoming campaigns, key dates, and content themes which will be available on SharePoint. Routine emails will be sent by the Riverwoods Communications and Advocacy Lead to the

Partnership Directory with updates. Riverwoods partners are encouraged to feed into this calendar, aligning their own content.

Monitoring:

A social media engagement tracker will be established to monitor performance. Wherever possible, partners should report their relevant engagement metrics. Access to this tracker will be available via Sharepoint.

Engagement:

Partners are encouraged to actively engage with their audience by responding to comments, participating in relevant conversations, and acknowledging user-generated content related to the project. If any questions arise as to how to respond, questions can be directed to the Riverwoods Communications and Advocacy Lead.

Website and Digital Centre

Riverwoods Website:

Sign off Procedures:

- New website copy, changes to the story map, and other informational pages are at the discretion of the Riverwoods Communications and Advocacy Lead, with sign off from the Scottish Wildlife Trust, Head of Communications and Engagement or Riverwoods Project Manager.
- Reorganising existing material on the website, updating partner lists, and minor changes are at the discretion of the Riverwoods Communications and Advocacy Lead, with sign off from the Riverwoods Project Manager, as required.
- Website changes regarding Riverwoods initiative level language and strategy requires sign off from: Riverwoods Project Manager, Scottish Wildlife Trust Head of Communications and Engagement, and the Strategic Advisory Group.

In the event of urgently required updates, if review by the Strategic Advisory Group is delayed, Riverwoods initiative level content will have the following disclaimer:

Information provided on this page was developed by the Scottish Wildlife Trust and represents the Scottish Wildlife Trust's perspective. We have a process in place to develop the strategic aims and objectives of Riverwoods with our partnership. The content of this page is subject to change, following these wider partnership discussions.

- Advisory Group and Working Group website material additions or updates requires sign off from the Chair of the group in question.
- Project showcase and case study copy requires sign off from the relevant leading partners.

Adding and Updating Content:

All partners are encouraged to offer suggestions for website material or design and offer signposting opportunities to relevant partner Riverwoods work. The Riverwoods website and Digital Centre of Excellence should be a growing, adapting, hub for tools and resources. As information becomes out of date, the partnership as a whole is responsible for flagging this and updating it.

Major website additions and updates will be broadcast to all partners via the Riverwoods Partner newsletter.

Partner Websites:

It is suggested that all Riverwoods partners' websites host a section dedicated to Riverwoods with the agreed information about the initiative, mention the partnership, and should refer interested parties to riverwoods.co.uk.

The Riverwoods Communications and Advocacy Lead is available to partners to help facilitate this process and draft and review website copy.

Data Collection:

For more information about data collection through the website and digital centre, please refer to the [Riverwoods Privacy Policy](#). Additional data sharing agreements are required between the Scottish Wildlife Trust and Riverwoods partners.

Video and images

- Internal video/images related to Riverwoods project streams captured during the lifetime of Riverwoods remain the copyright of the partner who captured them but will be made freely available to the other partners, subject to any conditions negotiated with the film producer/photographer. The provider will ensure that material has any credits required and will forward any restrictions (including third party availability) as appropriate.
- Access to Riverwoods image banks can be found on Sharepoint.

Site visits

Where a site visit or site filming is required on Riverwoods delivery projects, strict filming guidelines should be adhered to at all times.

- Media access to demonstration sites will be granted by the relevant project officer or equivalent – who will liaise with landowners and accommodate site visits
- Landowners must have explicitly given confirmation in writing for media to access to land and to being involved in filming or interviews
- National interview requests will be directed to the Riverwoods Project Manager
- Area-based interviews will be directed to the most relevant project officer or project partners, who will have specific regional information

Lobbying and Political Communications

The Riverwoods brand should not be used for any form of lobbying or actions which are actively directed at statutory agencies in our partnership.

The Riverwoods Advocacy Group, as a standalone group, has complete control over their outputs and messaging and does not require sign off from any additional partners. In the absence of a Riverwoods Advocacy Group brand, individual partner logos will be used on Riverwoods advocacy group outputs.

The Riverwoods Advocacy Group acts on a recommendation basis; offering feedback to the wider partnership on actions that can be taken by partners representing themselves.

Any public outputs from the Riverwoods Advocacy Group including but not limited to consultation responses, briefings, and social media posts of a political nature must highlight the standalone nature of the Riverwoods Advocacy Group.

The following text should be included: “The views represented in documents produced by the Riverwoods Advocacy Group are representative of the members of organisations who sit within the group and not Riverwoods as a whole.”

As a general rule, no MSPs (unless Ministers or ‘species champions’) or political parties should be invited to launch events or initiatives for the project – this is to stop any party politicians using the project as a political platform. Informative site visits can be conducted to highlight best practice delivery but invitations should extend cross-party where feasible. Briefings for MSPs are allowed but should not be viewed as publicity opportunities. This general rule also applies to MPs and MEPs.