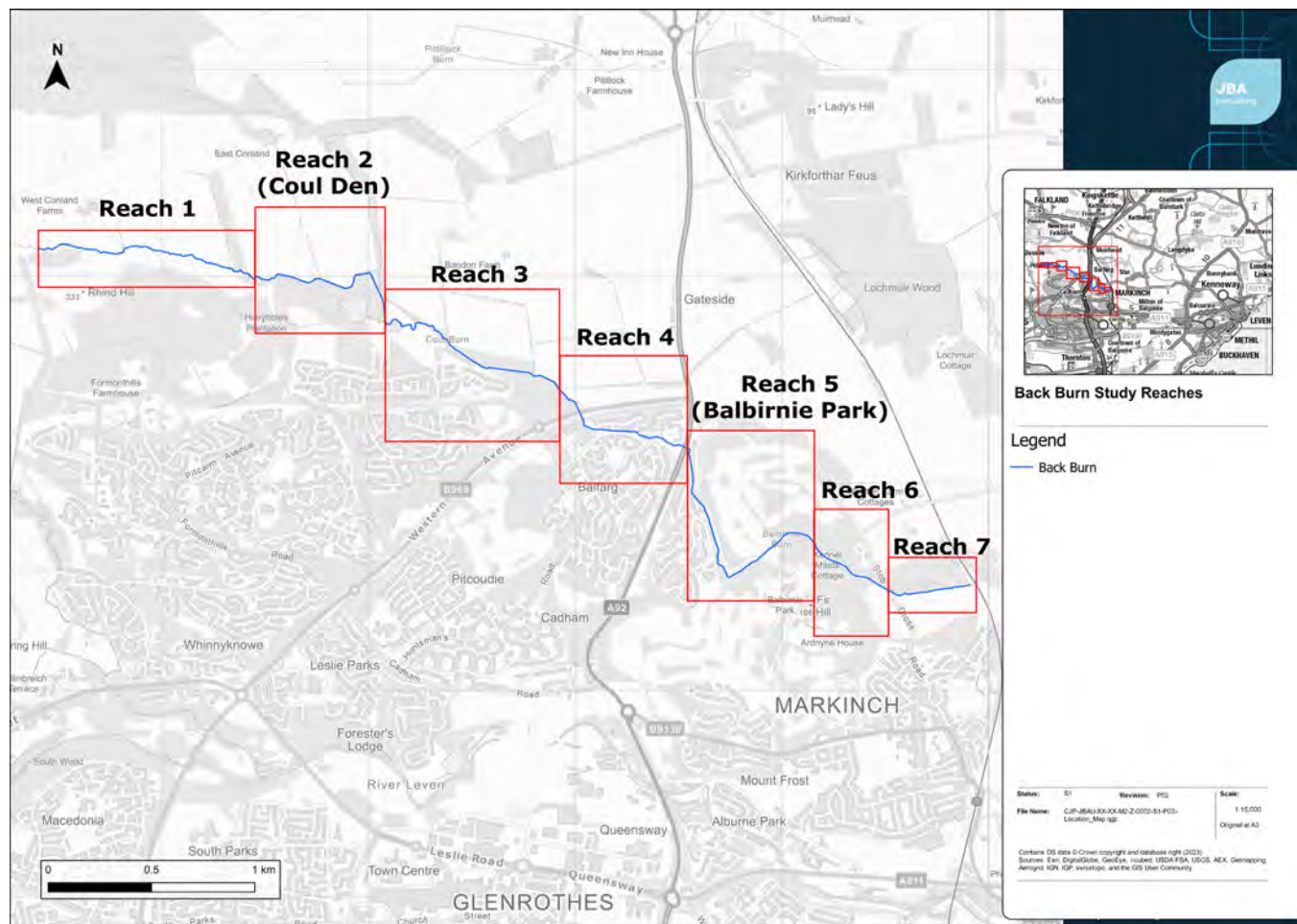


The River Leven and its burns and tributaries are a vital part of our local landscape. Throughout history they have played an important role in local industries and our parks and greenspaces. However, historic modifications have impacted on the way these watercourses function.

Where practical we are looking to allow them to work more naturally. One way we can do this is by removing or adapting some of these man-made changes.

As part of the Leven Programme our aim is to restore 5.8 kilometres of the Back Burn (also known as the Conland, Coul and Balbirnie Burn in these areas!) to a more natural state between Rhind Hill in the Lomond Hills and Newton, north of Markinch.

**Our vision is to restore the river for the benefit of local people and wildlife.**



The restoration of the Back Burn is part of a wider improvement of the River Leven. For more information visit [www.theleven.org](http://www.theleven.org)



The Leven Programme



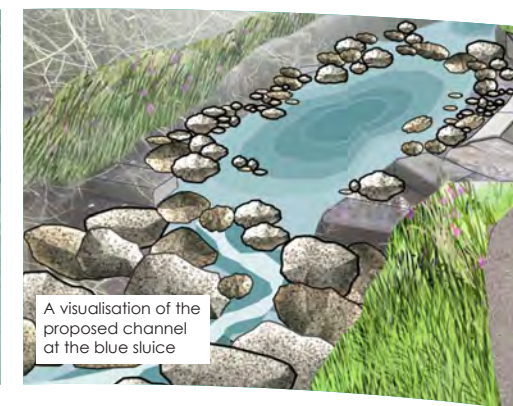
[back.burn@fife.gov.uk](mailto:back.burn@fife.gov.uk)



# Restoring the Back Burn Proposed Improvements

- Remove small redundant barriers such as boundary posts, walls and fences crossing the burn **allowing the river to flow unrestricted and sediment to move more freely**, as it would in a natural channel.
- Removing rock and stone bank protection **allowing the burn to reconnect to the floodplain**.
- At Coul Den rerouting the burn fully down its **original natural channel**, creating significant ecological benefits.
- Wetland planting along the banks and floodplain areas **to improve biodiversity**.
- Remove the large gabion baskets (stone filled wire baskets) at Coul Den and replacing them with **a more attractive and naturally functioning step pool like alternative**.

- Remove the large gabion baskets (stone filled wire baskets) downstream of Coul Reservoir replacing them with **a more attractive and natural functioning step pool like channel**.
- Where practical **removing small weirs** within Balbirnie Park to improve habitat for resident fish populations. This will involve adapting the weir to allow the burn to reconnect with its original channel around the blue sluice gate. Once water begins to flow down the original channel more will flow into and leave the reservoir. This will improve local ecology and wet woodland habitat around this area



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Historically, the burn flowed through what is now Coul Reservoir. In the late 1800's the reservoir was constructed for the Haig Distillery and a long, straight, cobble lined artificial channel was built to take the river flow past the reservoir. The distillery is no longer there and the reservoir redundant therefore there is an excellent opportunity to reconnect the burn with its natural channel.



A bridge will be installed within the current path network to allow for the burn to flow into the reservoir more freely as it establishes its natural route.

The reservoir will be retained to protect the large variety of aquatic plants and birds that are present today.

At the downstream side of the reservoir, we are proposing to replace the large section of gabions (wire baskets filled with stones) with a more natural step pool feature. We plan to remove the concrete crossing point replacing it with a bridge to allow access along the path network all year and to allow the river to flow more freely underneath.

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Balbirnie Park has an interesting history including as a designed landscape which along with more modern changes in use within the park have led to a range of modifications to the burn.

Proposals within the park will be sensitive to its heritage whilst balancing this with the opportunity to restore it to a more natural state.



Where possible we are proposing to remove sections of gabions (stone filled wire baskets), walls and cobbled areas that have been inserted into the burn in the past that prevent it from functioning naturally.



In addition there are a number of small weirs that confine the burn and we are proposing to remove these letting the river re-naturalise and recover over time.

We are also interested to know where people like to access the burn to see if we can make this easier at certain points rather than large areas of the banks becoming damaged and degraded due to use.

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