

Restoration Forth working on project at Dalmeny

Community members are again helping an important seagrass project at Dalmeny's Drum Sands as part of the innovative Restoration Forth.

Last spring as part of a trial, volunteers planted 25,000 eelgrass seeds, at East Lothian's Belhaven Bay, Pettycur Bay in Fife and Drum Sands: alongside dwarf eelgrass transplants. Eelgrass known as *Zostera marina* and dwarf eelgrass known as *Zostera noltii* are the two seagrass species found in Scotland.

And this month, a further 135,000 common eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) seeds have now been added thanks to the work of community volunteers trained by a team of experts in seagrass planting techniques, so that local residents can support seagrass beds to thrive in the future.

Restoration Forth volunteer Barbara said: "I'm passionate about the Restoration Forth Seagrass project because it brings together local communities around the Firth of Forth enabling us to do something tangible to help restore biodiversity and reduce global warming. Through the project, I have learned so much about the marine environment and met lots of like-minded people."

Restoration Forth volunteer Nigel added: "Planting the seeds and then returning to see that they have grown is amazingly satisfying. I really want to help keep our community involved so that the restoration work and awareness of our marine

environment continues long into the future.”

The seeds recently planted were collected in Orkney last year, with the support of the island residents. Since then, volunteers have helped in their processing over winter.

Esther Thomsen from Project Seagrass said: “Seagrass meadows can contribute to increase biodiversity, help tackle climate change, and improve water quality. The passion and collective enthusiasm of communities to dive in and help makes this project so special. There’s nothing like experiencing a seagrass meadow first hand to foster the understanding of this important habitat and to champion their future protection. Together, we’re monitoring our successes and failures and learning a lot from our trials – ultimately informing seagrass restoration science.”

The aim of Restoration Forth, a partnership with communities and organisations, is to restore 4 hectares of seagrass meadows and European flat oyster beds in the Firth of Forth.

It’s a three-year programme funded by Aviva, the ScottishPower Foundation, the Moondance Foundation and the Scottish Government’s Nature Restoration Fund, which is facilitated by the Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund (SMEEF) and managed by NatureScot.



Community volunteers plant thousands of seagrass seeds at Drum Sands Beach as part of the flagship Restoration Forth project. (Photograph: MAVERICK PHOTO AGENCY)



Community volunteers plant thousands of seagrass seeds at Drum

Sands Beach as part of the flagship Restoration Forth project.
(Photograph: MAVERICK PHOTO AGENCY)



Restoration Forth volunteers Barbara and Nigel seagrass seed planting at low tide. Pic Greg Macvean



Community volunteers plant thousands of seagrass seeds at Drum Sands Beach as part of the flagship Restoration Forth project. (Photograph: MAVERICK PHOTO AGENCY)