

**Press release for  
Immediate use**

**East Ayrshire  
Coalfield Environment Initiative**

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2005

## **New native woodland boosts biodiversity in Dalmellington**

**Work to create native woodland on the glens traversing the Chalmerston opencast site in Dalmellington is now underway thanks to grant funding from the Cumnock and Doon Valley Minerals Trust Fund.**

The Coalfield Environment Initiative, based in Muirkirk, was awarded £16,822 from the Minerals Trust Fund as a contribution to the project which will take place over 5 years at a total cost of £75,000.

This exciting project is a partnership with East Ayrshire Woodlands and sets out to recreate the woodland habitats that occur naturally along undisturbed burns and glens. The woodland will consist mainly of trees that are native to East Ayrshire such as oak, birch and juniper and it is hoped this will increase biodiversity in the area and provide new habitat for threatened species such as black grouse.

Paul Sutherland, Coalfield Environment Officer, believes this project is just the first step in enhancing the visual, recreational and wildlife opportunities in the area.

He said: "This project is taking place on part of the Chalmerston site that Scottish Coal has already restored. It's a great opportunity for environment organisations and the coal industry to work together and once established, this woodland will be a great asset. Not only will it provide opportunities for wildlife, but it will be visible from the A713, Dalmellington Road, enhancing the character of the area and providing access opportunities – the 'Scottish Coal Cycle Route' which aims to develop a long distance cycle route between Dalmellington and Coalburn will pass the woodland when it is completed."

East Ayrshire Woodlands are carrying out the planting for the project and their project manager, Bruce Davidson, added: "Native woodland makes up only 2% of Ayrshire's land area and many of the woodlands are very small. At

Chalmerston 40ha of land will be fenced to protect the existing fragile semi-natural woodland. By excluding grazing and planting saplings grown from seed collected in the west of Scotland we aim to secure the long term future of the habitat and the animals that depend on it.”

## Ends

For further information about the CEI please contact Paul Sutherland or visit our website –

<http://www.ea-cei.org.uk>

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## Notes:

### Coalfield Environment Initiative

The Coalfield Environment Initiative (CEI) has been formed to enhance, conserve, and promote the environment in East Ayrshire. Our work is driven by a belief that:

- East Ayrshire is a fantastic place for wildlife
- restored open cast coal sites offer great opportunities for creating new wildlife habitats
- community participation in wildlife conservation enhances people’s lives
- young people are the decision makers of tomorrow and should be given every opportunity to discover the value of their environment today

The CEI believes that a high quality environment, rich in biodiversity, will make East Ayrshire a valuable and attractive place for people to live, work and play.

The 3 aims of the CEI are :

- *Environment* – to enhance the natural environment and landscape within the CEI project area
- *Understanding* – to increase understanding and appreciation of East Ayrshire’s wildlife and it’s value, providing and developing opportunities for learning about and experiencing wildlife
- *Engagement* – to increase community participation in wildlife conservation, enabling local people to contribute to environmental improvements and develop new skills

The CEI is a partnership supported by:

