



Regenerating the Tay Bioregion

A Framework for Action

2025 - 2045

Part 1

Learn About The Tay Bioregion &
Assessment of the Health of the Tay
Bioregion in 2025

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Bioregioning is a place-based biophysical¹ and cultural response to the planetary crises² we are facing. It re-invigorates and restores how we humans think about our presence on this planet and how we act, because it challenges us to see a geographic area – our place – through its natural systems instead of the infrastructure humans have designed – turning shires and cities into biomes and watersheds.

Through this work we aim to create opportunities for the people of the Tay Bioregion to re-perceive their interdependence with the natural world and take the urgent action needed to bring human and biotic communities back into a healthy, balanced co-existence with each other.

¹ Biophysics is an interdisciplinary science that applies the principles and methods of physics, chemistry, and mathematics to understand biological systems

² the interconnected challenge of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution that threatens ecosystems, human health, and the planet's future

Part 1: Learn About The Tay Bioregion & Assessment of the Health of the Tay Bioregion in 2025

Part 2: Opportunity Analysis & Strategic Directions

Part 3: Governance, Collaboration & Finance

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2.0 Foreword & Introduction

Structure of this document

The three parts of the document lay out a route map for how practical action might be taken.

- **Part One: Learn about the Tay Bioregion**, followed by an **Assessment of the Health of the Tay Bioregion in 2025**
- **Part Two: Opportunity Analysis and Strategic Directions**, with potential scenarios for the future over 5, 10 and 20 years, transition pathways, expected returns, and illustrative projects
- **Part Three: Governance and Finance** infrastructure needed for delivery

Defining Bioregions

Bioregions are “whole-life places.”³ They are shaped by the ecological patterns, cultural resonances, and shared context of a particular landscape. In the case of the Tay Bioregion, the boundaries are defined by the Tay River system⁴

Bioregions are not simply supply-sheds for water, food, minerals, or fibre. They are coherent ecological systems - forests, soils, rivers, seas - interwoven with human cultural knowledge developed over millennia. Unlike artificial political jurisdictions, bioregions are defined by natural and human patterns:

- **Hard boundaries**: geological, tectonic, hydrological
- **Soft boundaries**: ecological, climatological
- **Human boundaries**: cultural, identity-based

While many bioregions are defined by watersheds, they can also be mountain ranges, islands, marine environments, or deserts.

Why a Bioregional approach matters

Bioregioning is the practice of re-inhabiting a place - learning to live in ways deeply attuned to its ecological, cultural, and historical realities. It is about becoming native to that place through attention, relationship, and reciprocity. It is both repair and reimagination: tending to the wounds of disconnection and extraction while co-creating futures rooted in mutual care among human and other than human communities.

Bioregioning requires **systems thinking** - a way of looking at how different parts of something connect and affect each other, rather than focusing on each part separately. A bioregion is not a collection of separate parts - forests, rivers, farms, communities - but an interconnected, interdependent whole. This holistic view allows us to design regenerative ways of living that

³Dark Matter Labs [Partnering Offer To The Field of Bioregioning](#)

⁴See [Tay Fisheries Management Plan](#) Map

weave together community, ecology, culture and economy, building resilience at the scale of place.



The confluence of the Rivers Ericht and Isla in Strathmore, photo Markus Stitz

This framework begins from a simple recognition: healthy, thriving bioregions are not optional. They are the foundation of long-term economic resilience, climate adaptation, and collective well-being. In the context of today's deepening polycrisis, regenerating both natural and human systems must be understood not as a peripheral cost but as the core infrastructure needed for a liveable planet.

From Vision to Action

But for this framework to develop into a realised plan, bioregioning needs to translate into practical action. This includes:

- Land use changes that support healthy ecosystems
- Protection and enhancement of biodiversity
- Restoration of freshwater and marine systems
- Promotion of organic and agroecological practices
- Reduction of energy demand and carbon emissions
- Scaling down of material consumption and production
- Building local supply chains to strengthen food security and resilience
- Nurturing a sense of place and belonging through re-inhabitation
- Designing social and economic infrastructure for a Wellbeing Economy and Just Transition
- Applying appropriate technologies to enable all the above

Bioregioning as a Global Movement

Bioregioning in Tayside is part of a growing global phenomenon. The contemporary bioregional movement emerged in the 1970s along North America's west coast, where artists and activists

sought ecological, place-based alternatives to mainstream environmentalism. Inspired by Indigenous and regional traditions, it emphasised realignment with the rhythms of watersheds, soils, plants, and animals - an ethos long practiced by Indigenous peoples through reciprocal stewardship. Today, catalysed by planetary crisis, bioregional networks are flourishing worldwide - from the Americas and Australia to Europe, through initiatives such as the Bioregional Weaving Labs Collective and the Bioregions of the North Atlantic Isles Network, of which Bioregioning Tayside is a part. This movement is a contemporary articulation of an ancient truth: to live "indigenous to place."

A call to reconnection

This framework connects to and builds on this new global energy. It calls for ecological restoration, cultural transformation, economic relocalisation, and the patient rebuilding of social fabric badly weakened by centuries of colonialism and decades of neoliberalism.

Bioregional organising reminds us that we cannot abstract ourselves from ecological reality. Water, food, energy, shelter all remain unavoidably local. A watershed does not care about political divisions. Soil degradation affects everyone who relies on it. Upstream estate owners and downstream farmers are bound together, just as rural and urban communities depend on one another. As Pamela Mang has written:

"What makes a shift to true sustainability possible is the power of the connection between people and place. Place is a doorway into caring. Love of place unleashes the personal and political will needed to make profound change. It can also unite people across diverse ideological spectra because place is what we all share: it is the commons that allows people to call themselves a community."

The work begins with a place-based, relational worldview that measures progress in decades, not quarters - resilient to shifting climates, changing economies, and unknown futures. Wisdom sets the direction, knowledge fuels the journey. Together, they form the values of a region intent on thriving in harmony with its place in the world.