



Location and Context

The *Flooded Valley* Landscape Character Type only occurs in one location in Dumfries and Galloway, along the course of the River Dee and Loch Ken. The linear loch, although raised artificially, is semi-natural in character, with intricately shaped margins edged with riparian woodland and wetland.

Key Characteristics

- Generally shallow V-shaped valley with narrow valley floor.
- Extensive water body with bays and wetlands.
- Glacially shaped terrain: drumlins, roche moutonees, rocky ridges and eroded slopes.
- Improved pastures of medium scale with dry stone dyke enclosures.
- Rough grassland with heather and gorse on rocky ridges
- Small broadleaf woodlands and shelterbelts
- Small but numerous coniferous plantations (except at Cairn Edward, where forestry is extensive).
- Major road corridor.

Landscape Character Description

Landform

The *Flooded Valley* occurs in one location in Dumfries and Galloway – along the course of the River Dee and Loch Ken. It is very distinctive. The middle and lower reaches of this valley are somewhat different from the dale landscapes in that they bear more obvious signs of glacial and fluvio-glacial erosion and deposition on the side slopes, in the form of drumlins, roche moutonees and rocky ridges, all of which indicate clearly the direction of ice movement. The valley floor and flood plain of the River Dee is narrow in comparison to the dales and flooded valley (i.e. Loch Ken). The original ribbon loch which formed on the level valley floor has since been artificially enlarged by the construction of the hydro dams down river. Although Loch Ken is long-established, in places the water's edge is not defined by a

clear shoreline and appears temporary as though the loch has recently flooded a field system.

The area of water, its irregular outline of bays and wetland fringes, makes it especially interesting. The character of the flooded valley changes from its open lower section to closer confinement adjacent to the granite hill mass of Cairn Edward and Bennan Hill.

Landcover

The valley has a mixture of improved grazing on the smooth drumlins and rough grassland with heather on the rocky ridges. The patterns of dry stone dykes are particularly distinctive on the drumlins. Some field enlargement and road improvements have led to a loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Closer to the loch, small forests, broadleaf woodlands, shelterbelts, hedgerow trees and wetland scrub become more significant. The semi-natural woodlands along water courses, in wetlands and on steep slopes are essential features of this landscape. The landscape is valued for recreation and caters for a number of active and passive interests.

Settlement

The pattern of settlement is relatively dispersed and widespread, and provides a framework of point features. Early and later medieval sites such as abandoned churches and castle mounds are the most visible elements of past settlement, and their distribution largely echoes that of modern settlements and houses.

Perception

The attractiveness of this landscape – the combination of diverse landcover patterns and the dominance of the Loch – is appreciated by large numbers of people who visit the area for recreation. Its scenic qualities are also recognised by its inclusion within the Galloway Hills Regional Scenic Area designation.

The scale of the loch is unique within the region. There are many small scale features in this landscape, from the islands on the loch, to the low mounded landforms, rocky terraces, interlocking drumlins and small woodlands, individual trees, narrow winding roads and diverse settlement pattern. The setting of the steep conifer-clad slopes of Cairn Edward and Bennan Hill provide a simple and dramatic contrast to this intricate landscape. The overall relief of the landscape is low.

This is one of 390 Landscape Character Types identified at a scale of 1:50 000 as part of a national programme of Landscape Character Assessment republished in 2019.

The area covered by this Landscape Character Type was originally included in the Dumfries and Galloway LCA (Land Use Consultants), published 1998.