

# Researching Scotland's Ruralities: Social Science Perspectives on Current Issues in Rural Scotland

20 March 2013

Perth Concert Hall, Mill Street, Perth, PH1 5HZ

Convened by the University of Edinburgh (ESRC Genomics Forum, CHSS), James Hutton Institute and SRUC for the Scottish Consortium for Rural Research

## OBJECTIVE

This one-day meeting is being convened by the Scottish Consortium for Rural Research ([SCRR](#)), a major network of Scottish researchers that, to date, has concentrated more on the biological than social-scientific aspects of rural research. Accordingly, the aim is to encourage social scientists (broadly interpreted) working on topics in a rural context to come together to exchange information and insights, and to help SCRR develop a more fully cross-disciplinary approach to "rural research". The meeting will have a number of substantive focus points but is also planned to encourage researchers to network. The meeting is being supported by SCRR and the ESRC Genomics Policy & Research Forum.

## PROGRAMME

Foyer, Perth Concert Hall	
10.00-10.30	Arrivals and registration
Norrie Miller Studio, Perth Concert Hall	
10.30-10.35	<b>Welcoming Remarks from SCRR</b> <b>Professor Steve Yearley</b> – Chair of Executive Committee, SCRR/Director of ESRC Genomics Forum
10.35-10.50	<b>Opening Address</b> <b>Professor James Curran</b> – Chief Executive, SEPA
10.50-11.00	<b>Opening Perspective</b> <b>Dr Rebekah Widdowfield</b> – Head, RESAS, Scottish Government
11.00-12.15	<b>Plenary Session 1: Multiple land uses, knowledges and the resulting tensions</b> This session will focus on the increasing diversity of land uses in rural areas of Scotland: land for agriculture, forestry, conservation, hunting, species re-introductions, leisure industries and 'alternative' energy. It will examine how competition between these land-use objectives is handled and investigate the ways in which various forms of expertise are invoked to legitimise different land-use practices. Chair: <b>Dr Alastair Macdonald</b> - Secretary, SCRR Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr Kathy Velander</b> – Senior Lecturer, Napier University</li> <li>• <b>Dr Christine Watson</b> – Team Leader, Soil Science &amp; Systems, Crop and Soil Systems, SRUC</li> <li>• <b>Dr Anna Lawrence</b> – Head of Social and Economic Research, Forest Research</li> <li>• <b>Dr Rob McMorran</b> – Centre for Mountain Studies, University for the Highlands and Islands</li> </ul>
12.15-13.15	<b>Parallel Session 1: The political sociology of rural Scotland</b> Rural social science often tacitly overlooks questions of political culture and party politics in rural areas. This session will take advantage of the current urgent debate over national identity to explore the political sociology of rural Scotland through case-studies and other data. Chair: <b>Professor James Hunter</b> - Emeritus Professor of History, University of Highlands and Islands Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr Michael Rosie</b> – Co-Director of the Institute of Governance, University of Edinburgh</li> <li>• <b>Dr Sarah Skerratt</b> – Head, Land Economy and Environment Group and Reader, Rural Society and Policy, SRUC</li> <li>• <b>Dr Philomena de Lima</b> – Director, Centre of Remote &amp; Rural Studies, University of Highlands and Islands</li> </ul>

<b>Tilt Room, Perth Concert Hall</b>	
12.15-13.15	<p><b><i>Parallel Session 2: Empowerment and vibrancy in rural society</i></b></p> <p>Policy makers are keen to envisage rural Scotland as characterised by vibrancy and empowerment. This session examines the extent to which different forms of rural community in Scotland can be viewed in this light. It will also highlight recent policy initiatives, assess whether they have acted to promote dynamism in rural communities and examine who the principal beneficiaries have been. Chair: <b>Dr Liz Hawkins</b>, Team Leader, Rural Social Research, Scottish Government Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr Liz Dinnie</b> – Researcher, Social, Economic and Geographical Sciences, James Hutton Institute</li> <li>• <b>Professor John Nelson</b> – Acting Director, dot rural/Chair in Transport Studies, University of Aberdeen</li> <li>• <b>Dr Artur Steiner</b> – Researcher, Rural Society Team, SRUC</li> </ul>
<b>Foyer, Perth Concert Hall</b>	
13.15-14.15	Lunch and poster viewing
<b>Norrie Miller Studio, Perth Concert Hall</b>	
14.15-15.15	<p><b><i>Plenary Session 2: Sustainability in Rural Scotland</i></b></p> <p>This session will analyse how broad notions of ‘sustainability’ are put into practice in rural areas of Scotland. It will consider how rural communities are affected by national and international sustainability agendas, and examine the meanings attached to sustainability in rural cultures and practices. Chair: <b>Dr Ian Bainbridge</b> – Head of Science, Scottish Natural Heritage Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dr Jayne Glass</b> – Research Associate, Centre for Mountain Studies, University of the Highlands and Islands</li> <li>• <b>Dr Ann Bruce</b> – Senior Research Fellow, University of Edinburgh</li> <li>• <b>Professor Bill Slee</b> – Social, Economic and Geographical Sciences, James Hutton Institute</li> </ul>
15.15-16.00	<p><b><i>Closing Discussion with refreshments</i></b></p> <p>In this session panellists and the audience will discuss broad conclusions from the day’s presentations, and attempt to outline research and engagement opportunities relating to social scientific work on topics concerning rural Scotland. Chair: <b>Professor Stuart Monro</b> – Scientific Director, SCRR Discussion Panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Professor Steve Yearley</b> – Chair of Executive Committee, SCRR/Director of ESRC Genomics Forum</li> <li>• <b>Professor Deb Roberts</b> – Social, Economic and Geographical Sciences Group Leader, James Hutton Institute</li> <li>• <b>Dr Jane Atterton</b> – Policy Researcher, Rural Policy Centre, SRUC</li> </ul>
16.00	<b>Meeting close</b>

## POSTERS

Space will be provided for participants to display posters outlining current/recent research projects on the following themes:

- Climate change and rural communities
- Being on-line in rural Scotland
- High Nature Value farming
- Rural-urban linkages
- Rural towns and housing
- Inequalities, disadvantage and poverty in rural Scotland