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Danish-born student set to clean up the West Highland Way thanks to Edinburgh mountain men's legacy

An Edinburgh University neuroscience student has received support from the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant, run by the John Muir Trust, to walk the length of the West Highland Way collecting every single piece of rubbish as he goes.

Anders Jespersen, 28, who moved to Scotland from his Danish homeland in 2006, will be inviting others to join him along the way. He will also host night-time campfire stories at suitable locations on route to encourage conversation about the amount of rubbish discarded and what we can all do to care for our local environment.

On receiving news of his grant, Anders said: "I am so very excited and grateful that the John Muir Trust have decided to support my project with this award and by doing so have created the opportunity for me to give something back to Scotland's wild places and involve other people along the journey."

Rosie Simpson of the John Muir Trust who manages the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant said: "We've been delighted with the number and quality of applications this year.

"As an organisation that looks after some of our popular mountain and coastal footpaths, the John Muir Trust appreciates how important it is to continually raise awareness of the problems that litter causes. We wish Anders all the best with this worthy expedition along one of Scotland's greatest trails.

"Des and Bill lived active, adventurous, outdoor lives and would be delighted to know that their inspirational lives are now helping to look after the wild places that were so close to their hearts."

The Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant was established to help people gain life-changing experiences in wild places that have scientific or educational value.

Anders was one of six successful applicants to the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant. You can follow him on Twitter during his journey this summer at @azimuten.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

ABOUT THE DES RUBENS AND BILL WALLACE GRANT

The John Muir Trust administers the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant for free. The grant was set up in honour of Bill Wallace, who died of heart failure in February 2007 while skiing in the Alps at the age of 73 with two artificial hips, and Des Rubens, a popular teacher at Craigmoynton High School in Edinburgh who was killed in June 2016 in an Alpine climbing accident at the age of 63.

Since the grant was established in 2007, initially in honour of Bill Wallace, it has supported almost 50 people from all walks of life, from students to scientists, from grandmothers to gardeners, take part in life-changing adventures of educational or scientific value in some of the wildest places in the world.

The John Muir Trust looks to support projects, adventures or expeditions that reflect the ethos of both men and give others an opportunity to follow in their footsteps.

ABOUT THE JOHN MUIR TRUST

The John Muir Trust is a membership based conservation charity dedicated to the experience, protection and repair of wild places. The Trust was founded in 1983 and was inspired by the life and works of John Muir (1838-1914), the Scots-born founding father of modern conservation and the inspiration behind national parks. We operate in Scotland, England and Wales and are the guardians of some of the finest wild places in the UK including Ben Nevis, Helvellyn and Schiehallion.

For more info about the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant, contact:

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<https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/grants-and-awards/the-bill-wallace-grant>