

**PRESS RELEASE:**

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## **Legacy of Edinburgh mountain men sends Sheffield student to Democratic Republic of Congo**

Thanks to a grant in memory of two inspirational mountain men, a student of ecology and conservation biology at the University of Sheffield, will travel to the Democratic Republic of Congo to support local conservation efforts in the fight against illegal poaching.

Caroline Milson, 41, will spend two months working alongside a small NGO and forest village communities in the buffer zone of Salonga National Park, gathering data to inform efforts to reduce pangolin poaching. Data gathered by Caroline will be shared with Wildlife Crime Officers at Global Wildlife Conservation.

On receiving the news of the grant offer Caroline said: "Obviously I'm absolutely delighted to receive the grant – but the monetary aspect is only one part of it. The fact that the great John Muir name supports and encourages my trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo to carry out such vital conservation work on species impacted by the illegal wildlife trade – an issue I am so passionate about – is a real honour."

Rosie Simpson of the John Muir Trust, who administers the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant said: "We wish Caroline all the best with her trip and hope her contribution to the local conservation effort to protect rare species from poaching goes a long way towards supporting relationships between countries in reducing hunting pressures."

"Des and Bill lived active, adventurous, outdoor lives and would be delighted to know that their legacy is now helping Caroline with her trip."

Caroline is one of eight successful applicants to the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant. This grant was established to give people the opportunity to seek out life-changing experiences in wild places of the world in ways which will benefit both the person, and the wild places themselves.

## **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 Craigroyston 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 60 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>