

**PRESS RELEASE:**

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## **Adventure grant supports Orkney woman to survey remote highland peatland sites by bike**

A peatland ecologist from Stromness will travel to the mainland to visit and survey important peatland sites with funding support from the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant.

Sarah Crowe, 42, will travel between remote, hard to access sites in the north Highlands by bike in June 2021, to survey peatland habitats that are National Plant Monitoring Scheme sites. Sarah has already completed surveys for sites on Orkney so these extra sites will help fill the gap in data in the North of Scotland. Each day will involve a combination of cycling, botanical recording and field illustration in her sketchbook.

On receiving the news of the grant offer Sarah said: "It has been really great to receive this funding from the John Muir Trust, as it will allow me to re-engage with my previous work as a peatland ecologist and biogeographer. It will also enable me to develop my work as a new botanical artist, both helping me towards gaining fellowship membership of the Society of Botanical Artists and bringing through my artwork, a greater public understanding and awareness of Scotland's globally important peatland ecosystems. I really want to show people how intricate and beautiful these landscapes are, and I believe botanical art is a perfect way to illustrate it."

Rosie Simpson of the John Muir Trust, who administers the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant said: "Sarah's expedition enables her to combine a love for plant ecology and botanical illustration with an ambitious cycling schedule over long distances on isolated routes. Sarah's survey work will support the National Monitoring programme, informing our understanding of the health of the wider plant community and a mobile exhibition of the artwork Sarah produces will be part of the expedition's legacy."

Sarah is one of six 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 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.

Grants of £200 to £2,000 are awarded annually on merit to individuals who wish to experience wild places in the spirit of Des Rubens and Bill Wallace and meet the grant criteria.

### **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>