

# NEWSLETTER

Engaging with people and wild places

Spring 2022

## People places planet

Encouraging people to become  
advocates for wild places

The John Muir Trust inspires people to connect with wild places, so their experiences empower them to become advocates for their protection.

[johnmuirtrust.org](http://johnmuirtrust.org)

JOHN  
MUIR  
TRUST

# People, wild places, planet

Our diverse network of engagement across the UK is united by a common thread - bringing people, wild places and the planet together.

Supporting people to enjoy wild places, encouraging them to leave only footprints and take away the inspiration and desire to advocate for their protection is core to everything we do.

We are seeing more and more acts of kindness and community spirit through the challenges of a pandemic, the twin crises of climate and biodiversity, and the increasing recognition of the inequalities in society. More and more people are coming together to show a collective desire for lasting change and a more balanced future.

As restrictions lift we've seen John Muir Award activity increase, volunteering opportunities open up, and we have launched two Junior Ranger programmes.

## Get involved

We know that a positive experience in nature will inspire and encourage the behaviours needed for a sustainable world. That's why we work to inspire champions of the future to make and develop that connection - people of all ages and backgrounds across city, town and countryside.

Everyone should have the ability to achieve their potential through access to wild places and given the chance to experience the numerous benefits. Through this newsletter it's fantastic to hear of the appreciation and joy from people able to re-connect with others, wild nature, and the chance to make a difference.

As we continue to recover, this newsletter aims to support you to get the most of your engagement with the John Muir Trust by connecting you to our wider work. It also aims to celebrate the important role we all play in connecting people with wild places so that they are empowered to care.

**David Balharry**  
Chief Executive



PHOTO © KATE DYKE

## Adventure grant

Citizen scientist Kate Dyke spent two-weeks on a small group of islands in the Outer Hebrides, to undertake cetacean surveys. Kate received a Des Rubens Bill Wallace grant, which aims to give people the opportunity to seek out life-changing experiences in wild places.

"Following a humbling time spent with little distraction, seemingly far from the pressures of a consumption hungry society, I was reminded of the wonders of the natural world. While removing plastics and rubbish from the shores, I was shown the ongoing need for and importance of us humans being mindful of our actions and striving to live in balance with nature."

Seek your adventure and apply for a [Des Rubens Bill Wallace Grant](#) before the 15 January each year.

## John Muir Award recipient achieves British Citizen Youth Award

John Muir Award participant and Army Cadet Taylor Ashe received the British Citizen Youth Award at a special award ceremony at the Palace of Westminster with Lord Dholakia OBE DL and Anthea Turner.

Taylor said: "During Covid I wanted to make the world a bit better, which I hope I did, we can all do our part. Through the John Muir Award I was able to set challenges for myself to improve the environment. I thoroughly enjoyed making my chosen wild place better for everyone to enjoy".

PHOTO © TAYLOR ASHE



## Twenty-six portraits for COP 26

Eighteen-year-old Sarra Wassu was one of 26 young climate change activists photographed by Glasgow photographer Andrew Cawley as part of his project to find inspiring, young, environmental and climate change activists, who are all trying to make a difference.

Sarra, who has volunteered with the John Muir Trust and achieved her John Muir Award, said organisations like the Trust have been a huge help with raising awareness.

“Now it’s up to us to take action and take the next steps in our life to combat climate change. All it takes is for everyone to come together and play their wee part, because together we can make change.”

*Be inspired by the [COP26 Young climate change activists in pictures](#)*

PHOTO © ANDREW CAWLEY



PHOTO © WAVE RANGERS NORTH DEVON



## Positive action for mental health and wellbeing

In Devon, Wave Rangers is an entirely free, all year-round project working with 10-20 year-olds to develop their environmental awareness, help tackle climate change, volunteer in community projects, learn new skills, have fun, and make new friends while working towards their John Muir Award.

“Just being in the fresh air helps a lot. I try to do it as much as I can myself, but having this [Wave Rangers], to tell me you’re going out, you’re going to do something, I’m like yeah... It’s been a long tough road, I’ve got many issues, I’ve been bullied throughout my life and I’ve finally found this place and it’s where I feel accepted and happy and it’s honestly the best I’ve ever been.”

Wave Rangers Participant

*Read more on how organisations are taking action to harness [the power of nature connection to promote positive action for mental health and wellbeing](#).*

PHOTO © ANDREW CAWLEY



## Ben’s UK Coast Journey

Through the Trust’s Journey for Wildness campaign, Ben Taylor planned to walk, wade, slosh and drift round the UK coastline volunteering his time to help care for wild places.

“In the wake of the madness of this pandemic, and with the looming pressure of the current climate emergency we are all facing, I have come to the conclusion that I what I really need to do is to stop faffing around worrying and do something that will, I believe, actually make a positive difference.”

*Be inspired by [Ben’s journey](#)*

### Journey for Wildness

Help us raise money and awareness for wild places and re-connect with nature by doing your own [Journey for Wildness](#). Sign up for planning guides, fundraising support, and tips to help you get started.

# Investing in the future of Wales / Buddsoddi yn nyfodol Cymru

Funding from Natural Resources Wales is providing vital funding for every school in Wales to have the opportunity to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places through the John Muir Award.

Over 13,000 people are benefiting across a three-year project with aims to reach every school in Wales with information, advice and guidance from the Trust.

Funding is enabling educators to access a suite of free Welsh language and curriculum focussed resources, as well as training and development opportunities.

Find out more including a Cymraeg version [here](#).



IMAGES © VISIT WALES - YOS INDUSTRY PHOTOGRAPHY

---

## Keeping It Wild in London

From 2018 to 2021, the John Muir Trust joined forces with London Wildlife Trust, Headliners and London Youth to get young Londoners involved with nature conservation and improve the diversity of people involved in the natural heritage sector.

Read all about the [Keeping it Wild project over the three years in its final summary report](#).

Through different activity strands, young people from black, Asian and minoritised ethnic groups (BAME), disabled or from lower socio-economic communities:

- took action through nature conservation activities and community-based projects
- made their voices heard through a Young People's Forum
- built valuable skills through paid traineeships.



IMAGE © LONDON WILDLIFE TRUST + PENNY DIXIE

### Impact on young people

**87%** feel inspired to take action

**85%** have a better understanding of natural heritage

**80%** have a greater sense of ownership over their local nature



# Youth work and climate crisis

The Trust has contributed to *Our Climate Emergency*, a special YouthLink Scotland publication that brought together international, national and local reflections on climate change, from a youth work perspective.

*Our Climate Emergency* published by Scotland's national agency for youth work, aims to share practice and learning to bolster a commitment to support and campaign with young people to build a true and tangible legacy from COP26 in Glasgow.

Alongside The Trust's words, it was positive to see the John Muir Award being used and referenced by Borders Forest Trust, Scottish Borders Council, North Lanarkshire Council and Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Follow the link to read [Our climate emergency: youth work's role for people and planet](#) timed to coincide with COP26.

## Award delivers for climate and nature

Our impact report - How the John Muir Award delivers for climate and nature in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park - shows how the John Muir Award helps groups take action for the climate and nature in Scotland's first National Park.

Find out more and how you can get involved - [download our Loch Lomond & The Trossachs partner publication](#).



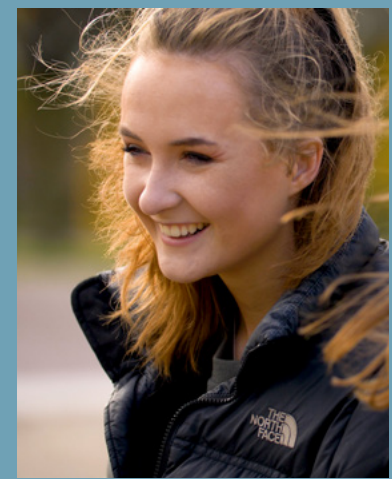
IMAGE © MICHAEL MCGURK

## Trust commits to #iwill Power of Youth Charter

Since 2013, the Trust has supported the #iwill campaign to make social action a part of life for young people. We've now signed the [#iwill Power of Youth Charter](#), committing us to continue and further our support for young people to take social action, including:

- a renewed commitment to work with a wide range of organisations across different sectors to reach people underserved by the environment sector
- promoting and advocating for the importance of youth social action for the environment through our partnerships, networks and communications
- continuing to showcase and celebrate the positive difference that young people make for wild places.

Find out how you and your organisation can also commit to the [#iwill Power of Youth Charter](#).



## Wild nature aids recovery

Research has shown the John Muir Award helps schools maximise use of outdoor spaces; draw on existing good practice to enable physical distancing; meet the needs of school/home approaches to learning, and support the wellbeing of educators, learners and their families.

Learning outdoors and a focus on nature connection has helped restart education in Scotland, especially for pupils with poverty as a barrier to attainment.

Since moving out of lockdown we've seen a nearly 40% increase of John Muir Award activity in schools.

Download the full reports:

- [John Muir Award and Education Recovery in Scotland](#) - a summary of how our John Muir Award supports restarting schools, equity in education and helps raise attainment.
- [Closing the Gap: how the John Muir Award helps raise attainment in Scotland](#) - a full report on how the Award is being used to raise attainment and achieve equity in education.

JOHN  
MUIR  
AWARD

wild places:  
DISCOVER  
EXPLORE  
CONSERVE  
SHARE

# Help keep the Award free

Here's how John Mur Award Providers and partners can help the Trust keep the Award free for participants.

The John Muir Award encourages people to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places. It provides opportunities for participants from all backgrounds to take action for nature, climate and their communities - fostering new skills, improving wellbeing and supporting access to the great outdoors.

As demand grows and activity increases, so does the cost to the John Muir Trust of running the Award. You can help us keep it free.

## 1. Fundraise as part of your John Muir Award

Ideas range from sponsored events and guided walks to ticketed picnics and up-cycling products.

[More fundraising ideas](#)

## 2. Donate to our Wild Action Fund

Help the Trust meet resource costs (each certificate costs £1 to produce) and inspire more people to take action for nature.

[Donate here](#)



[Get involved, contribute, donate here...](#)

### 3. Add us to your funding and proposals

Include the Award in budgets and funding proposals and show your stakeholders your dedication to the experience, protection and repair of wild places.

[Add value to your funding proposals](#)

### 4. Become a Member of the John Muir Trust

Group, corporate, individual or joint/family: whichever type of membership you choose you'll join over 11,000 like-minded people.

[Join here](#)





IMAGES © SARAH MCNEILL

# Junior Ranger programme launched at Quinag and Nevis

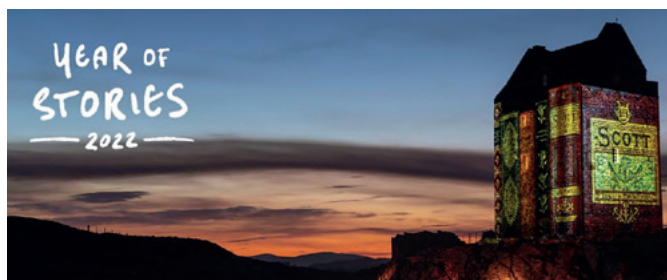
**W**e're working with passionate and motivated teenagers from the Scottish Highlands giving them an opportunity to learn about their local area, develop practical skills, and offer a taste of work and different roles in the outdoors.

Led by John Muir Trust staff and with partner support, Junior Rangers meet fortnightly as part of the school's existing 'Developing the Young Workforce' initiatives. The young people are encouraged to speak up for the benefits of wildness and play a part in preventing the loss of wild places.

Watch a [short film](#) on the motivations of our Junior Rangers and read more about their activities on our [website](#)

The Junior Ranger programme has been made possible with funding from ALA Green and support from partners such as Nevis Landscape Partnership, Coigach & Assynt Living Landscape Partnership and the Woodland Trust.

**"I think that the program will open a lot of job opportunities, and skills that could be used in certain jobs. I feel that an area of employment in my future may be linked to practical outdoor skills and wildlife preservation, so I believe that being involved would support me in my career goals. On a personal level, I love the fact that the program is based entirely outdoors."** Junior Ranger



## Wild writer series of talks

**I**n 2022, Scotland is celebrating its Year of Stories. To kick-off the new year, the John Muir Trust is hosting a Wild Writer series in partnership with Vertebrate Publishing. We invited some excellent writers to speak about their latest books that tell the stories of adventure in our wild places.

Still to come...

**7pm, 9 February** - Susanne Masters will give us an insight into the wildlife beneath the waves in her new book *Wild Waters*

**7pm, 23 February** - writer and editor Alex Roddie will take us on a journey along the Cape Wrath Trail in his book *Farthest Shore*.

The events are just £3 each to attend, which will go towards supporting the Trust's work to protect wild places. Book tickets and share the events by visiting our [Wild Writers events page](#)

From mountain festivals, to volunteer days - a full listing of events and opportunities can be found [here](#)



IMAGES © ALEX RODDIE



# Wild Action Fund

The wild world we love is in danger, but as we reconnect with nature, more of us learn to care and give back. Here's how you can help inspire more people to care for nature.

**T**he ever-growing threat of the climate and biodiversity crisis means the importance of collective action for the environment has never been greater. While protecting and restoring wild land is essential for improving biodiversity and storing carbon, it's crucial that we inspire conservation action at a grassroots level wherever we can.

The more people experience and value wild places, the more they will want to protect them. Each year, the John Muir Trust creates opportunities for tens of thousands of people to discover, explore and conserve wild places, often for the first time. Our work inspires wild flower meadows in school grounds, nature-friendly gardens in prisons and care homes, and hands-on conservation volunteering in some of our wildest landscapes. So much great work has been done, but there's much more still to do.

Your donation will help us create opportunities for more people to protect and conserve our natural environment, from our wildest landscapes to urban green spaces.

Your gift will...

- support grassroots environmental action
- support access to wildness for wellbeing
- inspire youth social action
- help enable vital volunteering

Find out more on our [website](#)



IMAGES © PENNY DIXIE, LONDON WILDLIFE TRUST



## Volunteer with us

Do good work for the great outdoors, make new friends and help us care for wild places.

Volunteers play an essential part at the John Muir Trust. By becoming a volunteer with us you can help make a difference for the wild places you love, whilst learning more about the Trust.

Volunteering is a wonderful way to build new skills, meet like-minded people and make new friends. There are plenty of ways you can volunteer with us; not all of our opportunities take place outdoors, so if you would like to support the Trust in other ways we would love to hear from you!

Current volunteering opportunities include:

- Practical conservation volunteering – take part in volunteer days at wild places we and our partners care for.
- Events - join us at special events where we champion wild places.
- Local Members' Groups - volunteer with like-minded people in your community.

*If you have skills and experience you feel would be useful to the Trust, visit our [website](#) to sign up or contact the Trust and we can add you to our volunteer contact list.*

IMAGES © CHRIS PUDDPHATT AND CHRIS PRESCOTT

# Equality, diversity and inclusion for wild places

In 2020 the Trust responded to articles and enquiries on our stance on inclusion, Black Lives Matter and the legacy of John Muir in relation to both.

Our web item [Inclusion in wild places: Addressing the past, present and future](#) continued to welcome constructive conversations with partners old and new on ways to broaden participation in wild places across society.

This has been part of much longer-term plans for the organisation - diversifying our board, staff and support base, and addressing the need to be a relevant and progressive organisation.

In 2021 the Trust developed an [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#). This policy is a further step on a journey that will take us closer to being an equitable, diverse and inclusive organisation that supports people from all walks of life and allows them to experience and protect wild places now and in the future.

The policy highlights the continued need to diversify our partnerships and reach. We continue to welcome constructive conversations on ways to broaden participation in wild places across society and would actively encourage anyone seeking to do so to get in touch with us directly.

## Backbone report recommendations



The John Muir Trust contributed towards a new report exploring the lack of Black, Asian and Ethnic diversity in the outdoor and nature sector.

The [Changing Landscapes Actioning Change Report](#) was compiled by Backbone - a leading minority ethnic outdoor environmental education organisation - using research and learning from a number of their hosted symposiums.

Funded by NatureScot, Cairngorms National Park, and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, it offers the following three key recommendations which the John Muir Trust supports.

- The Sector agencies set medium and long-term goals in their strategies as a way of moving away from short-term activities that could be perceived as 'window dressing' and not sustainable.
- A need for greater transparency to avoid accusations of nepotism and gatekeeping.
- Leaders for Change: Training Academy. A vehicle for the sector and Black, Asian and Ethnic community groups to collaborate as equal partners in a shared venture, with joint accountability and responsibility.

Scots Asian-run hillwalking group Boots and Beards celebrate that wild places are for all in a recent hike up Ben Nevis.



PHOTO © BOOTS & BEARDS

**Delivering Sustainable Land Use**

In the middle of this climate crisis – our land could be one of our most powerful weapons in the fight for our future.

Allowing native woodlands to expand to cover an additional 3.9 million hectares, would remove an average of 6.96 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e a year. If carbon sequestration of landholdings was maximised, we could soak up 13 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e a year – equivalent to removing every single vehicle from our roads.

We have an idea of how to get there:

**HIGH TAX BAND**   **MEDIUM TAX BAND**   **LOW TAX BAND**

A tax could be applied to large-scale landholdings over 1,000 hectares, according to their land uses and current estimated negative or positive emissions

Revenues generated could fund further peatland and woodland restoration schemes.

Additional public benefits include: increase in wildlife, increase in employment opportunities, reduced flooding, better water quality, and recreational opportunities leading to improved mental and physical health.

**JOHN MUIR TRUST**

**Around 60%** of Scotland's land would be liable for assessment.

Removing 13 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e would be worth **£390m a year** to the Scottish economy.

The John Muir Trust is a Scottish charitable company limited by guarantee. (Charity No. SC002041 Company No. SC081420). Registered office: Tower House, Station Road, Pitlochry, PH11 5AN. Tel: 01794 470800

View a larger version [here](#)

# Rethinking carbon and land use

“We know our land has the potential to meet Scotland’s climate change targets.”

Scotland’s land use sector emits more harmful emissions than its aviation and shipping. But it could be the country’s most powerful tool to reach net zero. It’s time for change, and we’ve got a way to make it happen.

The Trust’s Carbon Emissions Land Tax proposal was developed as a contribution to the discussions around Scotland’s response to the global climate emergency.

It highlights the role - and current under-realised potential - of land functioning as a natural carbon store and, with this, the need to incentivise behavioural change amongst Scotland’s large-scale landowners.

- Find out more, and read [Why Scotland Needs a Carbon Emissions Land Tax](#).
- Watch and share our [short animation introductory film](#) and [with Gaelic](#).
- Discuss, consider and debate if this proposal could work – in Scotland and across the UK?

## Wild and Well

Our Wild and Well campaign celebrates the invaluable connection between wild places and people’s health.

There’s a growing body of evidence which highlights the power of wild places to support and enhance our wellbeing – emotionally, spiritually, physically, and mentally. The Wild and Well online resource hosts a wide range of information helping us to explore and explain this connection.

It’s for you to use to benefit your own thinking, work and/or interest, and to contribute and add to help share understanding.

- [Browse our Wild and Well resources](#): Articles, research, books and more, exploring the link between wild places and wellbeing.
- [See 12 ways to connect with nature](#): Ideas for re-igniting the spark of life when you feel stressed, anxious or depressed
- [Explore Evidence and Emotion](#): Why the Trust is creating a hub of detailed knowledge and information on why wild places matter for the health of individuals, community and society



Wild and Well

## John Muir Day

The John Muir Trust 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. Muir inspires our purpose to conserve, protect and restore wild places for the benefit of all.

John Muir Day offers an annual opportunity to mark John Muir’s birthday, 21st April 1838. Make a note in your calendar of John Muir Day 2022. Visit our [website](#) and help celebrate all the benefits of wild places across the UK and beyond.



# What's next for John Muir Trust?

“In these increasingly changing and challenging times, we know other organisations across many sectors are thinking creatively about their own strategic directions. We are asking if we can collaborate and form alliances with others to help us showcase how wild places tackle the climate crisis and reverse biodiversity loss, and inspire people about the benefits of wild places across the UK.” *Kevin Lelland, John Muir Trust, Head of Development and Communications*

## New John Muir Trust draft Strategic Plan 2022-2026

We're seeking and inviting a shared understanding and collaboration for wild places.

Our Trustees and staff with input from Members have been developing a new Strategic Plan which will take us through to 2026. It is set to be launched this spring.

We are now carrying out a wider consultation and inviting responses from our existing and any new stakeholder networks. [Find out more and download the latest Strategic Plan.](#)

We would like to hear your thoughts on our direction, especially around the following prompts:

- We are interested in shared understanding and collaboration. Can you see areas of crossover between this draft John Muir Trust strategy and your own strategic direction?
- Are you involved in or planning any projects, campaigns or policies that we should be aware of, and/or that we can contribute towards?
- Is there anything that is missing from our draft strategy; are we using the right language; and/or can we better position ourselves and wild places across geographies and sectors?

Submit any responses or request a follow-up discussion by emailing [partnerships@johnmuirtrust.org](mailto:partnerships@johnmuirtrust.org) stakeholder consultation before 25 February 2022.

### The leading voice for wild places Strategic Plan 2022-2026

#### Our vision

A world where wild places are valued for present and future generations.

#### Our purpose

Conserve, protect and restore wild places for the benefit of all.

#### Our focus

Inspire people about the benefits of wild places across the UK and showcase how wild places tackle the climate crisis and reverse biodiversity loss.

#### Our strategic objectives

- Demonstrate exemplary management of wild places.
- Inspire people and communities to benefit from and advocate for wild places.
- Influence government and land managers to protect wild places.
- Strengthen societal understanding of the value of wild places.
- Exemplify best practice in our organisation for all.

#### Our key messages

- Wild places are where nature has most freedom to regenerate.
- Wild places are for all.
- We are dedicated to the experience, protection and repair of wild places.

#### Our aspirations

- Persuade more people to take action to protect wild places.
- Increase the amount of land we own, or jointly own.
- Influence more land in the UK to be managed to higher standards.
- Evidence how wild places tackle the climate crisis and reverse biodiversity loss.
- Demonstrate the economic, environmental and health benefits to communities and society from wild places.
- Be widely recognised as the thought leader on the subject of wild places.



**Our focus:** Inspire people about the benefits of wild places across the UK and showcase how wild places tackle the climate crisis and reverse biodiversity loss.

## Thanks to our engagement supporters including:

Natural Resources Wales; NatureScot; Scottish Government; The Gannochy Trust; East Ayrshire Council; Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority; Lake District National Park Authority; Cairngorms National Park Authority; Heritage Fund; London Wildlife Trust; Castansa Trust; Nineveh Trust; ALA Green Charitable Trust; Nevis Landscape Partnership; Coigach & Assynt Living Landscape Partnership; Woodland Trust.

## Contact us

Our team is based across the UK.

You can find a full list at

[www.johnmuirtrust.org/about-us/our-team](http://www.johnmuirtrust.org/about-us/our-team)

Please contact us on 01796 470080

or email [info@johnmuiraward.org](mailto:info@johnmuiraward.org)