
Grant supports young adventurer to learn about ecological initiatives in Tanzania.

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Mae Aiko Macadam, will trek and camp through Northern Tanzania with funding support from the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant.

Mae Aiko Macadam, an A-Level student from London, will join a group from World Challenge on the 21-day adventure. The trip includes camping in the Ngorongoro crater, a massive volcanic basin with the highest density of lions in Africa, and hiking through the tropical rainforest of the Usambara mountains where 25% of the 2000 plant species are unique to the area. Mae will spend 6 days of the trip staying in a rural community, learning about the impacts of climate change at a local level, visiting a 'green school', meeting sustainable tea farmers and planting trees. In Tanzania, deforestation occurs at twice the global rate resulting in habitats being lost, biodiversity harmed, and wildlife placed at risk.

Mae lives in London, in a flat without a garden, but is already no stranger to adventuring. For her 16th birthday, Mae planned and led a 4-day adventure in the South Downs, mountain-biking, wild swimming and camping with friends. Alongside planning and fundraising for her trip to Tanzania, Mae will also be completing her Gold Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and A-Level Geography fieldwork trips this year. Following her A-Levels Mae hopes to study Environmental Studies, Geography or International Relations at university.

On receiving the news of the grant offer Mae said: "I'm really excited to have the opportunity to venture so far afield, trekking in the Usambara mountains and working with a community on an afforestation initiative. I am keen to pursue a career in sustainability, so am incredibly grateful to the John Muir Trust for helping to kickstart my interest in the outdoors."

Jenny Seaman of the John Muir Trust, who administers the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant said: "The grant panel were impressed by Mae's obvious enthusiasm for exploring wild places along with her determination to seek out opportunities to develop her skills and knowledge."

Mae is one of six successful applicants to the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant in 2023. 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.

Editor's Notes

About the John Muir Trust

The John Muir Trust is a leading voice for the UK's wild places. Its stewardship of some of Britain's most iconic wild places, including Ben Nevis and Helvellyn, is guided by three freedoms; ensuring nature has the freedom to repair itself, people have the freedom to enjoy the benefits, and communities have the freedom to thrive. For 40 years, the Trust has advocated for the protection of wild places by evidencing their benefit to society. Driven by the belief that wild places are for everyone – it also provides opportunities for people from all walks of life to engage with nature through its UK-wide environmental award scheme, the John Muir Award.

About the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant

The grant commemorates two former Presidents of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, who each led inspiring and adventurous lives. It was set up to give others an opportunity to follow in their adventurous footsteps and experience wild places. Projects should have an educational or scientific component and benefit wild places.

Bill Wallace, died of heart failure in February 2007 while skiing in the Alps at the age of 73 with two artificial hips.

Des Rubens, was a popular teacher at Craigroyston High School in Edinburgh was killed in June 2016 in an Alpine climbing accident at the age of 63.

Grants are for £200 to £2,000 and open to UK applicants of all ages. Closing date for applications is 15 January each year. Further details on how to apply: <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/whats-new/grants/des-rubens-and-bill-wallace-grant>

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