

Press Release

JOHN
MUIR
TRUST

Adventure Grant supports year long coastal clean-up.

04 April 2023

Violet Fraser, will spend a year removing and recycling marine plastics from the coastlines of the Scottish Highlands and Islands, with funding support from the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant.



Violet Fraser is a 35-year-old environmental enthusiast living and volunteering in Dundee. She recently completed a Conserver level John Muir Award and is now passionate about making a sustainable lifestyle accessible for those with low incomes and neurodivergence. Violet is an advocate for the autistic community in environmental circles and hopes her project will show others that activism and connection to community can support mental wellbeing.

Violet will spend the next year using low carbon travel options to explore the Highlands and Islands, immersing herself in the coastal landscape. Throughout the journey she will organise and take part in beach cleans, learning how to remove marine plastics and recycle them into useful products. Marine plastics and ghost nets (fishing nets that have been lost or abandoned in the ocean) pose a threat to wildlife which can become entangled or sick from ingesting discarded plastics. Violet plans to use photography and film to document her journey and encourage others to take action to conserve our coastlines.

Violet hopes that by advocating for neurodivergent individuals within the conservation community she can encourage others with an interest in sustainability to take part in their communities and to find innovative ways to overcome social barriers. She enjoys benefits of cold-water swimming, walking, running and conservation volunteering and hope to set an example of how mental health can be significantly benefited by time spent in the outdoors.

On receiving the news of the grant offer Violet said: "I'm absolutely thrilled to be awarded this grant. I'm so grateful for this opportunity to visit areas I've never experienced before, and to make a real difference to my environment. This grant will allow me the freedom to explore creative uses for marine plastics as well as spend time in these beautiful places. I'm excited to plan my next beach-cleaning adventure!"

Jenny Seaman of the John Muir Trust, who administers the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant said: "The grant panel were delighted to be able to support by Violet's year-long project to explore and clean up coastal habitats. They were especially impressed by Violet's commitment to low-carbon travel and her determination to show that a sustainable lifestyle can be accessible for those with low incomes and neurodivergence"

Violet 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.

Violet will be posting about her journey on Instagram: @sustainably.spectrum

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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