

JOHN MUIR AWARD

wild places:
DISCOVER
EXPLORE
CONSERVE
SHARE

John Muir Award News Autumn 2010

The John Muir Award is the main educational initiative of the John Muir Trust. It encourages people to connect, enjoy, and care for wild places.



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

Biodiversity

What's it ever done for us?

'Nature - What's in it For Me?'

It's our life-support system

Nature may look wonderful, but there is more to it than just its appearance. Nature provides the life-support system for humans. Without it, we cannot survive.

Pressures on the planet's resources

The challenge we face is that species and their environments around the world are being damaged beyond repair, threatening the natural systems that keep us alive. It is a serious issue. Two-thirds of the production capacity of the world's ecosystems has been destroyed. There is a solution, but it will require us all to work together to restore what we can of our natural world for the future.

Nature gives us air to breathe, water to drink, food to eat and fuel to keep us warm. This system has worked for human societies for thousands of years. However, the world's population is currently growing at a rate of five people every two seconds. In the USA, 4.6% of the world's population consumes 40% of the world's resources – and many other growing economies around the world see this way of life as one to aspire to. Population growth combined with damaging development currently results in environmental degradation and species driven to extinction. On a daily basis, there are more people to provide resources for, and more resources are needed to satisfy people's aspirations for a better life. So, it would seem obvious that we need to sustain nature, from where all our resources come.

The environment and our health

There are some clear links between the environment and our health, and also some less obvious ones. Fresh, clean air is clearly better for us than polluted air. There also is a direct relationship



Lorne GIU/SNH

between the areas in cities that have trees and green spaces and those that have the best health record. People who live within 500 metres of an accessible green space are 24% more likely to meet recommended activity levels, and the effects of exercise save the National Health Service billions of pounds a year. Just reducing the sedentary population

in the UK by 1% is valued at £1.44 billion a year. Properties near areas of green space are also worth more in the marketplace.

A relaxing environment also lowers stress and leads to mental wellbeing. So, ensuring people have access to more green areas is a great way to reduce the increasing amounts of money being spent on health care. As well as looking great, nature makes you feel great.

The environment and climate change

In recent years, there has been much media focus on climate change, an important environmental issue but not the only one, despite its wide-reaching effects on us all. Climate change predictions show what can happen when we do not think enough about what we are doing to our life-support systems.

The natural environment can be very effective in helping to prevent many of the impacts of climate change. For instance, systems such as forests, peatlands and the oceans capture carbon dioxide. Trees and other elements of "green infrastructure", including green roofs, can assist with shading and cooling in urban areas, where the temperature can be up to 4°C higher than in rural areas.



Lorne GIU/SNH

The natural environment, in the form of peatlands and other natural wetlands, can help to prevent flooding, and coastal mangroves can help to deal with tsunamis and storm surges.

In the UK, environmental stewardship is estimated to deliver savings of 3.46 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent a year, which is valued at around £1.25 billion. Using nature to help regulate climate and to combat the impacts of climate change could be a very cost-effective solution.

Putting a price on nature

The economy is not separate from the environment; it is reliant upon it. Much work is currently under way to put a price on the value of nature. One such study, The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) report, outlines the growing costs of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, the risks

these pose to business, and the potential opportunities provided by nature-related activities. www.teebweb.org

Despite all this, valuing nature is not just about money; making a contribution to people's physical and spiritual wellbeing, and their quality of life, is not something on which a precise monetary value can be placed.

So what can we do?

Although the story so far shows that there are a lot of serious and urgent challenges, there is also some good news. With better informed management, ecosystems could be saved and restored.

Many species have been brought back from the brink of extinction by targeted conservation action. Much work is being done to restore damaged environments that support a diverse range of species. Areas that are protected, such as national parks or other green spaces, help to conserve species and their habitats. They offer people aesthetically pleasing landscapes and places for exercise, leisure and spiritual revitalisation as well as contributing to the economy.

Conservation works best when it is engaging all sectors of society, as people, their livelihoods and the environment are inextricably linked. People, along with their individual social, cultural and economic situations around the world, need to be part of any environmental conservation process.



Tyne Water Youth Club/Mary Hogg

In today's society, where people increasingly live in urban areas and are remote from the natural environment, encouraging and enabling the participation of people in nature helps them to connect with it and value it.

Article adapted with permission from Conference Report based on key issues raised at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) UK Conference "Nature - What's in it For Me?", 19-20 April 2010 in Edinburgh. See IUCN UK home page for full report pdf download. Thanks to Paul Clarke, Chris Mahon.

Branding Biodiversity

The opening lines of a recent booklet 'Branding Biodiversity' from Futerra, a UK sustainability communications agency, asks us to 'Imagine the incredible complexity that makes up life on earth, bottled up for mass appeal. What if the word 'biodiversity'

represented not just a set of scientific concepts, but emotions of awe and wonder? Could biodiversity communications then trigger worldwide action to protect it?'

They propose a formula to help achieve this:



How to make this happen? Some of the proposed techniques will be familiar to all involved in the John Muir Award:



'Branding Biodiversity' concludes:

'We will endeavour over the coming years to inspire love and action for our natural world. Others have already started, and many are doing an excellent job. We look forward to seeing your new nature message. Good luck'

Read the full report - to download Branding Biodiversity just search for Futerra or visit www.futerra.co.uk/revolution/leading_thinking

Biomimicry

Nature as a Model, Measure and Mentor
Biomimicry studies nature's best ideas and then imitates these designs and processes to solve human problems.

Animals, plants, and microbes are the consummate engineers. They have found what works, what is appropriate, and most important, what lasts here on Earth. After 3.8 billion years of research and development, failures are fossils, and what surrounds us is the secret to

survival. Nature has forms, processes, systems, and strategies to solve human problems – sustainably. A leaf is a model for a solar cell, for example.

Biomimicry is a way of viewing and valuing nature based not on what we can extract from the natural world, but what we can learn from it.

For more information search online for Biomimicry, Janine Benyus.

10 principles of biomimicry

- diversify and co-operate
- use waste as a resource
- gather and use energy efficiently
- optimise rather than maximise
- use materials sparingly
- clean up rather than pollute
- do not draw down resources
- remain in balance with the biosphere
- run on information
- use local resource

Britain's most ambitious conservation visual media initiative ... ever!

20 photographers | 20 assignments | 1 vision

... to show the link between healthy ecosystems and healthy people. In other words...

A wilder Britain is good for us!

2020VISION is Britain's most ambitious photography-based conservation initiative ever! It's about an ethos that reconnects wild places with each other and reconnects us with wild places.

2020VISION is a communication project. It also relies on collaboration. By bringing top flight visual media specialists - photographers, videographers, sound recordists - together with the scientific and conservation community, an unprecedented set of communication resources will be created.

Using the power of visual imagery - unique in its ability to communicate on an emotional level - 2020VISION will inspire a huge and diverse audience. It will communicate a clear and concise message: that healthy ecosystems mean healthy people. And that has to be good for everyone!

Why 2020?

There are 20 photographers involved, 20 assignments and 20 months to get the job done. But it's more than that. A decade from now - in 2020 - a new generation of decision makers will face the legacy of things we do today. Within a decade, we need to have a new outlook on nature.

Our few remaining wild places are too small and fragmented to function as they should. And this has consequences for our own well-being as well as the creatures living there. So 2020VISION is exactly that: a vision for 2020 - a call for action to restore Britain's battered ecosystems over the next decade, and revitalise our relationships with them.



2020VISION/Ben Hall



How will it work?

2020VISION is about communicating the value of joining up and restoring large areas of land and water, allowing the animals that live there to move more freely. The 2020 Phototeam have identified 20 ambitious projects where this 'rewilding' is already happening. Their job is to produce the most stunning pictures possible from these 20 projects over a 20-month period, starting in October 2010.

The thousands of images generated from these assignments will then be woven into compelling stories and presented in innovative ways that will reach far beyond 'the converted': outdoor audio-visual shows and exhibitions, concert performances, digital downloads - the 2020VISION story will be told to anyone who will listen, and more importantly, those that currently don't!

The legacy of 2020VISION will be the most comprehensive, single-source image, video and sound library, which takes ecosystem thinking to a new level and a new audience.

John Muir Award and 2020VISION

The John Muir Trust was an early endorsing partner, shortly followed by our host partner Cumbria Youth Alliance. There are clear links between John Muir Award and 2020VISION. Use its ideas, images and inspirations to help with your John Muir Award activity.

- Discover a wild place - where are your local or favourite ecosystems, healthy or perhaps ailing?
- Explore and get to know these places better - visual techniques can be a great way to do this.
- Conserve - what can you do to look after them? Use the 2020VISION ePledge system on the Get Involved web pages.
- Share - through photography, film, music, sound recordings...



2020VISION/Ben Hall

2020VISION Young Champions

20 young people will have the opportunity to be part of this amazing project. Each young person selected will work on a photo-assignment, alongside the 2020PHOTOTEAM, to create their own set of images and stories.

The pro-photographers working on 2020VISION will each mentor a young person, providing them with advice, support and guidance for the duration of the project. Each Young Champion will then communicate their experiences, images, and their response to 2020VISION to their own communities and peer groups. These '2020VISION Young Champions' will be involved with media interviews and will act as ambassadors for 2020VISION, making presentations, giving talks and spreading the word.

The John Muir Award is working with 2020VISION to select one young person for each assignment location.

For more information click on the 2020VISION button on the Award home web page, or contact your Regional Manager.

Providing 20 young people with the chance of a lifetime!

Be a part of 2020VISION

As an individual

- Bookmark the website www.2020v.org and follow the photographers on assignment from October
- Sign up online for the 2020VISION newsletter and tell your friends to do the same - it's all about communication
- Do something for an ecosystem near you - ideas and e-Pledge are on the Get Involved page

As an organisation

- Support 2020VISION as a partner. This can be through simple endorsement, or providing in-house expertise
- Sponsor part of the project and benefit from a wide range of resources and media exposure
- Visit the web site and talk to us



Along with over 100 guests, we celebrated 100,000 John Muir Awards at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, in March. The event represented the breadth and depth of activity that has contributed to this milestone, including displays, interactive sessions, artwork, Ranger walks, case studies, time capsule, films (including a world premiere event), music, poetry, free raffle and John Muir travelling through time to join in.

Thank you to all our partners and contributors who helped make the event a success and thanks to Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh for hosting us.

Click on the **100,000 Awards** button on our home page for a picture gallery, quotes and films.

"Very inspirational. An analogy kept going through my mind, pixels.....lots of people, everyone making their small contribution, yet when they all come together the big picture is quite something." **Dave, teacher**

"It's such an achievement, this milestone - and the whole scheme. Many congratulations." **Robert Macfarlane, writer**

"I have been delighted to see the Trust celebrate some significant milestones, namely membership recruitment reaching 10,000 members and the presentation of the 100,000th John Muir Award. It gives me great encouragement to know that people from across the UK share the passion, beliefs and values of the John Muir Trust and want to support its mission."

HRH The Prince of Wales

Thanks to the Green Team for facilitating a John Muir acrostic poetry session:

Journeys
Over landscapes
Hundreds of millions of years
Nature flowing in
Muir's vision. Years later
Undred thousand Awards
Incredible!
Respect

You can still get involved by contributing to our special 100,000 Awards online gallery, created to capture and share your Award moments.

Submit a picture of yourself (or your group) with your certificate, in a place or setting that reflects your activity and achievement. Simply download the online gallery submission form, and send this to us with your image.



Cairngorms — A Special Place for Wildlife

Alan Smith

"The Cairngorms National Park is made up of a unique mosaic of habitats of very high quality and exceptional size and scale. It is a stronghold for British wildlife, including many of the UK's rare and endangered species, and those at the limit of their range.

1 in 4 of the UK's endangered species live in the Cairngorms; 95% of goldeneye ducks that breed in Britain do so in the National Park. It contains one quarter of Scotland's native forest; one third of UK land above 600 metres; more breeding farmland birds than the whole of Wales; the largest population of twinflower in Scotland...

Any one of these things would make an area special. That they all come together in the Cairngorms National Park makes it remarkable."

Extract from 'Sharing the stories of the Cairngorms National Park'.

It is all too easy to fall into the trap of reeling out statistics to demonstrate uniqueness and specialness when considering the biodiversity of the Cairngorms! As important as these figures are and the picture they paint of an internationally important wild place it is often the more personal stories and

experiences that uncover the true nature of a place and what it means to John Muir Award participants.

Pupils from Grantown Grammar School have been working over the past 2 years with RSPB staff in Abernethy Forest, digging shallow pits to help increase the available habitat for dragonflies and damselflies.

"I got really muddy when we were digging the holes for the dragonflies, but it was really fun. The holes will naturally fill with water so that the dragonflies will come."

Kate, S1 pupil



Brownies from Aviemore & Rothiemurchus got up close and personal to lots of biodiversity during their John Muir Award. They got stuck in to making papier mache models of iconic Cairngorms species such as capercaillie, red squirrel and ptarmigan. The models were then used as the centrepiece of the Cairngorms National Park Authority stand at the Royal Highland Show!



"The girls got a lot out of making the models; it helped them think about the life around them."

Frances Anderson, Brown Owl, Aviemore & Rothiemurchus Brownies.

North East England

Katy Standish

John Muir Award groups are finding out that helping biodiversity makes a difference far beyond the mouth of the Tees and the peaks of the Cheviot Hills. They are realising that biodiversity is life - everywhere and for every living thing. And the wildlife is starting to take notice...

Rare Durham argus butterflies and Britain's northernmost population of dormice have spotted John Muir Award groups discovering the region's Magnesian Limestone grasslands, hay meadows and internationally important blanket bogs.

On the Farne Islands, grey seals from one of the UK's largest breeding populations spied Seahouses Youth Project exploring the area.

Red squirrels at Gibside Estate watched Year 9 students from Kenton School working with National Trust staff to remove rhododendron and bash bracken

to create more space for native plant species. The north of England's conifer plantations and ancient semi-natural woods are the final mainland strongholds in England for red squirrels.

Abbey Hill School and Technology College in Stockton-on-Tees boosted biodiversity at the Daisy Chain Project. Teacher, Kathryn Lindop, said, "The students decided to create a wildflower and wildlife garden on an area of abandoned land because it is the International Year of Biodiversity. The ground was overgrown and the soil was extremely difficult to turn. Through perseverance and hard work the area has been transformed." The Explorer Award group made improvements across the site as well - building bird and bat boxes, creating insect piles and taking part in 'The Big Tidy Up', a national scheme run by Keep Britain Tidy.



While visiting the wildflower garden bumblebees overheard the group reviewing their experiences; Dan said, "I like the John Muir Award because we do great garden work together." Connor enjoyed "visiting different places and finding new things." And although they didn't say it, the bumblebees quite like Abbey Hill School's great garden work too.

Regional Roundup - Biodiversity across JMA Regions

Cumbria

Graham Watson

In what is perhaps the county with England's finest landscapes, and definitely its highest, there is a great range of biodiversity in Cumbria, a landscape of mountains, bogs, woods and lakes. Following a drop of rain falling onto Scafell Pike, at almost 1000m, on its journey to the sea we pass through many different habitats and an amazing array of wildlife, many not found elsewhere in England.

The high fells are cold and wet and home to Arctic-Alpine plants, the mountain ringlet butterfly and birds such as the Ring Ouzel. Whilst exploring the hills

as part of their Award activity many groups now get involved in the Fix the Fells project, helping the National Trust, Natural England and the Lake District National Park to repair erosion, caused by many years of many thousands of visitors, of this fragile habitat.

Rushing downstream our raindrop may well settle in one of Cumbria's many bogs or wetlands, or arrive in one of its famous lakes, tarns or meres. The bogs and peatlands are both natural flood defences and huge carbon stores. To be effective they need to stay wet which is why students from Outward Bound,

and young offenders from Carlisle, have been helping Natural England to look after Cliburn Moss near Penrith. Those in the boggy parts of Cumbria will be fascinated to find two of the UKs carnivorous plants, sundew and butterwort, surviving on a healthy diet of midges and flies.

It's no surprise that the Lake District is home to a wide range of fish, not forgetting that incredible giant of a bird the Osprey, which preys on them. Our cold water loving fish, the Vendace in Bassenthwaite and Derwentwater, and the Arctic Char found in only a handful of lakes, are unique in England and rare in the UK, but now have a very tenuous hold with our climate getting warmer.

Cumbria's well-watered woodlands still provide pockets of stronghold for red squirrel, display brilliant blue carpets of bluebells in the spring, and are especially important for their ferns and lichens. They also foster traditional woodland crafts which are playing their part in protecting our biodiversity, such as reinforcing river banks with coppiced wood known as spiling.

Many people see Cumbria as a beautiful recreational resource – created in no small part by its abundance of raindrops. So it's appropriate that activity through the John Muir Award and others helps people to realise the enjoyment to be had, as well as the care our landscape needs through direct action and through raising awareness of the importance of caring for this beautiful biodiverse county.



Outward Bound Trust

Wales

Hugo Iffla

Situated on the western side of an island off the Atlantic coast of continental Europe, Wales has a distinct and special contribution to make to biodiversity conservation. It has a rich array of habitats from the seabed to the summit of Snowdon. 75% of the Welsh coastal waters are of European significance and Wales has 40% of the UK's 'rhos' (moorland) pasture resource. Many of its varied habitats are accessed by groups involved in the John Muir Award the length and breadth of the country.

5 boys from Ysgol Dewi Sant have worked with Chris Davies of the Pembrokeshire Youth Service and the National Park ranger service on a woodland conservation scheme, identifying non-

native trees for felling, and re-planting with species including hazel, oak and holly.



At St Joseph's Primary School in Conwy, a girls' after school group has been helping

to restore a wildlife garden created during a previous John Muir Award project. They have found out which trees and plants are already established, and decided which species to plant, such as lavender and rosemary, to encourage greater diversity of birds and insects.

And near Betws-y-Coed, Del Davies has been busy fencing out the ubiquitous sheep from his 5 acre Wyddfid estate where he is working towards his personal Conserver level Award. This should allow regeneration previously denied by the persistent grazing. This site has been visited by a Leader training course in May and several National Trust working holiday groups have also been to explore operations there.

Biodiversity is life – Scotland in focus

Toby Clark and Kim McIntosh plot a course across Scotland to highlight some of the ways groups and individuals have recently engaged with nature.

Biodiversity action...

Tynewater Youth Clubs worked towards their John Muir Award for over a year based at Vogrie Country Park, Midlothian. The young people studied insect and plant species through all four seasons. Some were particularly interested in learning about bees and other pollinating insects.

"We have watched tiny caterpillars move into their chrysalis state to then emerge as beautiful butterflies. We sowed



Lorne Gill/SNH

wildflower seeds with the local Ranger Service. We have studied insects, made bug boxes and planted trees. Doing the Award has shown us many ways to

help look after our environment and biodiversity"

Mary Hogg, youth worker

Biodiversity threatened...

Upper Primary class at Banavie Primary School, Fort William, visited local woodlands at Corpach and Glen Nevis, and got involved with their local Red Squirrel Officer by helping survey work as part of their wider biodiversity outdoor project.

"Biodiversity is all living things on planet earth. If we kill them, then our biodiversity chain wouldn't work."

Katrin Murray P6

Awe and wonder...

Alistair Findlay started his own personal self-guided Discovery Award in July 2009 focused on a corner of a farm field close to where he lives, Slamannan, Falkirk.

"My highlights included finding a newt. I had never seen a newt on the site before and this showed me no matter how often you visit a place and think you know it, there is always something new to see. This makes my future visits very exciting, almost if I am discovering the site for a first time... time and time again."

Biodiversity benefits...

Quarriers supports young vulnerable homeless people aged 16-25 years. Involvement in the John Muir Award at Dounans Outdoor Education in Loch



Alistair Findlay

Lomond & The Trossachs National Park aimed to encourage new experiences and opportunities, increase confidence, team work and increase first-hand participation in their natural environment.

"The air actually feels clean, it's great to get a chance to be away from all the noise and hassle back home, I wish I could stay here forever, it's amazing!"

Young person with Quarriers.

John Muir Trust Vision - Our essential wildness

The John Muir Trust has produced a new Vision document. It explains what the Trust is about and why we think wildness is essential. Most importantly, it presents a new Vision for wild land and wild places in the UK and outlines the role of the Trust and others in helping to deliver that Vision.

The importance of wild land and wild places is highlighted, and the commitment of the John Muir Trust to work with people and communities to conserve, campaign and inspire is reinforced. Our aspiration is to ensure that wild land is protected and wild places are valued by and for everyone.

The four elements of this Vision are:

- Wild land is protected
- Wild land is enhanced
- People engage with wild places
- Communities thrive alongside wild land

For a copy of the Vision go to www.jmt.org.



Open to all... New Guidance

As the credits rolled on the final of Britain's Got Talent, Ant... or was it Dec?... invited entries for 2011 saying 'It's the only competition that's open to any age and any act'.

Common sense suggests that this is a 'top line' statement, and some parameters might be applied on the grounds of legal responsibility and a family audience. A more accurate, but longwinded, interpretation might be that it's open to any age and any act that the producers think are suitable to public audition.

To a degree, there are parallels with the aim of the John Muir Award to be 'open to all'. It's a shorthand way of putting across some of our working values – no rigid guidelines about who can participate; flexibility in interpreting Award criteria and what can be done to meet Award challenges; a commitment to working with diverse and hard-to-reach audiences... However there are situations in which it may not be suitable to use.

In our experience, there are a range of factors that can help to deliver 'quality' Award experiences for individuals and groups. There are also circumstances in which the John Muir Award may not be a good 'fit' – perhaps on account of young ages or a mixed ability/particularly large group.

We've provided some guidance on this which is available on the website on the Get Involved page, or from your Regional Manager. If you're thinking of using the Award please refer to this and discuss your ideas with us before filling in a Proposal Form.

We value the support and understanding of Award Providers in working co-operatively with this approach. A key starting point is to have a clear understanding of why the John Muir Award is being considered. Does your group want or need the structure/focus/celebration etc that the Award offers? It might not be necessary or appropriate. There should be a reasonable fit between proposed activities and Award Challenges. It's an individual Award, so each person getting involved should understand why they are, what the Award is, and have a sense of Muir's ethos.

Of course you don't have to do the John Muir Award to have meaningful experiences in wild places – any more than not appearing on Britain's Got Talent should stop you from singing in the shower, doing acrobatics with your kids in the park, or trying to make your dog dance like Fred Astaire. The guidance, and other pages on our website, offer suggestions for designing your own activities and have fun being in contact with nature.

Rob Bushby
John Muir Award Manager

John Muir Award Gatherings

John Muir Award Provider Gatherings are annual regional events that offer a chance to network, share good practice, and explore new ways of getting involved. They're for all involved in delivering the John Muir Award, such as teachers, instructors, youth leaders, care-workers, rangers, volunteers, community project officers, and up to 5 John Muir Award participants from an organisation.

This year, as it's United Nations International Year of Biodiversity 2010, the Gathering theme will be 'Biodiversity - What's it ever done for us?' and focus on

- Biodiversity and how it affects us
- Techniques and good practice for communicating its value with others
- Examples from Award Providers

Scotland	Beecraigs Country Park, West Lothian, Friday 8th & Saturday 9th October - New afternoon / morning format (including optional overnight camp)
Cumbria	Eco Centre, Cockermouth School, Friday 15th October,
North East England	Gibside National Trust, Gateshead, 22nd October
Wales	Rhyd-y-Creuau, Snowdonia, 29th October

To book a place please contact info@johnmuiraward.org or 0131 554 0114

Award in Action – Case Studies

Providers often tell us that they enjoy hearing about what other John Muir Award groups get up to. Over the past year we have collated a suite of case studies to demonstrate the reach and range of how people participate.

Through the words and images of group leaders and participants, they demonstrate the diversity of Award activity and outcomes. We hope that sharing good practice in this way will help to inform and inspire new and established Award Providers alike.

Visit www.johnmuiraward.org and click on 'Award Case Studies'.



Ribbon of Wildness - discovering the Watershed of Scotland

In his new book, former John Muir Award leader Peter Wright takes the reader on a fascinating epic journey the length of Scotland. The continuous wildness of the terrain of bog, rock, mountain, moor and forest provides the theme. Excellent reading for those who love Scotland's rich and varied landscapes.

Visit www.watershedpic.org.uk.



Alec Finlay – the road north, white peak | dark peak

Alec Finlay is an artist, poet & publisher. 2 recent pieces of work include:

white peak | dark peak

Potentially the largest public art work in the UK, white peak | dark peak, a permanent re:place commission by Alec and a team of poets, was launched in the Peak District this Easter. The project is an audio-visual word-map of the Peak District National Park, with over 70 poem-views and 20 letterboxes.

www.whitepeak-darkpeak.co.uk

the road north

A companion project, the road north, creating a word-map of Scotland, is now underway. Travelling for a year, this collaboration between Alec and Ken Cockburn will visit 53 locations, recording their journey on a blog. Go to www.theroadnorth.co.uk to visit an interactive map. Early destinations included Falkland, Jupiter Artland, Schiehallion and Orkney.



Visit www.alecfinlay.com for links to both.

International Year of Biodiversity 2010



This year the United Nations celebrate the diversity of life on Earth with International Year of Biodiversity 2010. Visit www.biodiversitylife.net for ways to get involved.

Biodiversity images

52 Scottish Natural Heritage images are available at: www.flickr.com/photos/snh-iyb2010/

These can be downloaded for use as screensavers, in presentations, newsletter etc.

Sarah Outen talk – Solo Across The Indian Ocean

7pm Tuesday 14 September
Tiso Edinburgh Outdoor Experience, Leith

Record-breaking oarswoman Sarah Outen talks of her epic voyage, rowing



solo across the Indian Ocean in 2009, and her passion for wild places.

'She could hold any audience enthralled effortlessly and was a joy to have on our programme.' Mark Radcliffe, BBC Radio 2 presenter

Tickets £5, £3 concessions from John Muir Trust (0131 554 0114) & Tiso Edinburgh Outdoor Experience

Visit sarahouten.co.uk & sample the 3 minute YouTube 'Girl in a boat' clip

Big Society for Biodiversity – Have your say on nature

Your input is needed to plan for nature's future. The government's Big Society drive has been rolled out to cover biodiversity issues – the Environment Secretary has called for views to help shape the government's policy on the environment.

The Natural Environment White Paper is due to be published in spring 2011, the first ever white paper in 20 years. It will set out measures to protect wildlife and promote green spaces in England and also be a chance to recognise the economic value of the services nature provides.

Caroline Spelman said 'We want everyone to contribute their views on the natural environment – whether they're concerned at the plight of the songbirds in their garden, the quality of air in their town, flooding problems worsened by people paving over their gardens or the fate of our wider countryside.'

Everyone from bug collectors to business leaders is invited to submit their comments to the discussion document. An invitation to shape the Nature of England can be found on the Defra website under 'Our Responsibilities', with questions such as:

- Which parts of the natural environment matter most to you?
- How do you feel you benefit from the natural environment?
- How do you think we could improve the natural environment?

Deadline for responses is 30 October 2010.

Words from the Wise – Aldo Leopold

The outstanding scientific discovery of the twentieth century is not television, or radio, but rather the complexity of the land organism. Only those who know the most about it can appreciate how little we know about it. The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: "What good is it?" If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. If the biota, in the course of aeons, has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.

Get in touch with the John Muir Award — the educational initiative of the John Muir Trust

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The moss *sporophyte* is typically a capsule growing on the end of a stalk called the *seta*.

Mosses - what have they ever done for us?

- store clean water
- protect us from flooding
- provide our oxygen
- store our carbon dioxide
- provide homes for wildlife
- blueprints for biotechnology
- provide us with medicines
- dressings for wounds and nappies for babies
- inspiration for art
- a place to sit...

Image: Colin Varnell

