FOR MEMBERS OF THE JOHN MUIR TRUST

MEMBERS' NEWS

January 2016



Chair's welcome

As I write this message, we've just heard, after a nine-month wait, that the Trust has won its Judicial Review against the Scottish Government's decision to allow Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) to construct an industrial-scale wind farm at Stronelairg in the Monadhliath Mountains. To paraphrase John Muir, the mountains will be glad. To win a court case to protect wild land when pitted against the government and SSE is a remarkable result and in no small way due to members and friends who have helped fund the legal challenge. (STOP PRESS: The Scottish Government and SSE have announced they will appeal the decision. We are disappointed and have a response on our website. Once again, we must ask for support to continue to defend Stronelairg - see enclosed flyer.)

In recent weeks, our Wild Land Area 34 campaign also proved successful, with proposed wind farms at Glencassley and Sallachy in Sutherland being refused by Fergus Ewing, the Scottish Energy Minister. In what was a clear change of tone, the minister said these proposals had "significant and unacceptable landscape and visual impacts in the local area".

Then, just two days after the announcement, and for the second year running, the Trust collected the Outdoor Campaigner of the Year Award, as chosen by readers of The Great Outdoors Magazine, at the Kendal Mountain Festival.

And there have been other recent milestones. The John Muir Award celebrated its 250,000th overall Award in September, followed by Award number 10,000 in the Lake District National Park, and 25,000 in the Cairngorms National Park. All involved should be proud that a motion was lodged in the Scottish Parliament congratulating us on the Award's achievements.



I'm proud to also mention the Trust winning Scotland's Finest Woods Award for 2015 for work at our Knoydart property. While such records and awards don't say everything about what we do, they are indicative of the way we are perceived by others and the quality of our work.

In other news, those who follow the Trust's finances will be aware that we have reported financial deficits over the last two years. This is because the Trust's work has traditionally benefited from significant but unpredictable legacies which have reduced over this period. We have taken measures to address this, including some restructuring of the organisation, accepting voluntary redundancies to help reduce costs across the board.

This is the time of year when we invite nominations for the election of Trustees (see story opposite). Last year, we saw an excellent response with 14 candidates standing for six places. We'd welcome a similar response this time around. In the past, we have also benefited from volunteers taking minutes at Trustee meetings. If that is something that might be of interest, please do get in touch.

Finally, may I wish you all a Happy New Year. For those so inclined, you might consider a celebratory ski tour across the hills at Stronelairg, as I have done in the past. It's highly recommended.

Peter Pearson

Call for Trustees

It's time for our annual call for nominations to our board of Trustees. This year we have five vacancies, with two Trustees, Will Williams and Bill Wright, standing down at the next AGM having both served two terms of office.

The Trust is run by a board of 15 Trustees, currently led by Peter Pearson. Any member with the time to help us in our mission is very welcome to stand. We particularly encourage women and members from England and Wales to come forward.

For more details, please visit www.johnmuirtrust.org/trusteecall, where you will also find nomination forms. And if you'd like an informal chat about what might be involved, we'd be happy to put you in touch with a current Trustee. Contact Stuart Brooks initially on 01796 470080. Nominations must be received by Monday 7 March.

Inverness 2016

Our 2016 AGM and Members' Gathering will take place in Inverness from 3-4 June. See the enclosed booking form, or visit our website for more details. Thank you to our event sponsors, Ben Nevis Distillery, HF Holidays and Tiso.



In early December, the Trust celebrated a landmark legal decision in its campaign to stop the 67-turbine Stronelairg wind farm. It's a success that could not have been achieved without the support of members

The Stronelairg wind farm development, proposed by energy giant SSE, was given the go-ahead by the Scottish Energy Minister in June 2014. Consequently, a major chunk of the central plateau of the Monadhliath Mountains was removed from the final version of the Scottish Natural Heritage Wild Land Areas map.

Now, following a legal challenge by the Trust, the Court of Session has reduced the decision to approve the giant wind farm which would have been spread across an area the size of Inverness.

The ruling, by Lord Jones, revolved around two key points. First, that Scottish Ministers had failed to allow any public comment on a revised application. Written objections to the original proposal had outnumbered supporting letters by 15 to 1. Highland Council could have triggered a Public Local Inquiry by opposing the scheme, but instead agreed not to object on condition that it was scaled down from 83 to 67 turbines. However, no public consultation was held on the new, revised proposal.

The second ground for refusal was that Scottish Ministers had

not properly taken into account the objection by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the government's own advisory body, which opposed Stronelairg in principle because the impact on the landscape could not be mitigated.

John Muir Trust chief executive, Stuart Brooks, said: "This is great news for all those who love Scotland's wild land and wish to see it protected. The Trust will now ask SNH and the Scottish Government to reinstate the Stronelairg area in the Wild Land Areas map."

He added: "We could never have taken this case on without the backing of thousands of our members and supporters, and for that we give our heartfelt thanks."

As we went to press, it was announced that the Scottish Government and SSE will appeal the decision. The Trust will consider its reponse when the grounds of the appeal have been lodged. For more information, see www.johnmuirtrust.org/ stronelairg

Wild land victories

The closing months of 2015 saw a number of hugely encouraging decisions by the Scottish Government. In November, it refused permission for the Glencassley and Sallachy wind farms in Sutherland - proposals which, as we highlighted in our Wild Land Area 34 campaign, would have significantly diminished the Reay-Cassley Wild Land Area in the far north of Scotland.

The news followed an earlier decision Wild Land Area 29, near Ben Wyvis, and

to rule 'not competent' the Talladh-a-Bheithe wind farm at Rannoch in Wild Land Area 14. The irregularity in the latter's application had been highlighted by the Keep Rannoch Wild Campaign, with which the Trust worked closely.

Since July, a total of six wind farm applications involving 139 turbines have been refused by the Scottish wind farm, at Culachy, rejected by Highland Council.

However, we remain vigilant, because there are still applications further down the line, including at Caplich in Wild

Land Area 34. In November, we reiterated our opposition to this development after the developer submitted an addendum to the Environmental Statement. We'd like to thank members who also submitted objections. Keep an eye on our website for when the development is due to be

We will also examine proposals for new tourism developments at the Cairngorm ski area base station – plans sport offering on site – once a planning application has been submitted.

Major Skye path work begins

Arran Footpath Partnership, a specialist path contractor which employs local labour, recently began work on a major restoration project deep in the heart of Glen Sligachan on Skye. The work, commissioned by the Trust, will take place over several years at a total cost of around £200,000.

The first phase focuses on a remote site some 8km from Sligachan, where surface water combined with footfall has created a bare gully 7km long, up to 7m wide and nearly 1m deep. This will involve three-and-a-half month's work. Phase two is scheduled for October 2016, with the final stage expected in 2017. Please get in touch if interested in this project, or able to help close our funding gap of £56,000.

This work could not have started without the many generous donations to our Wild Ways Path Fund, plus support from HF Holidays, The Brown Forbes Memorial Fund, Kestrelman Trust and Scottish Mountaineering Trust.



Fundraising heroes

Thanks are due to two Trust supporters for their fundraising exploits: Gillian Siddons organised a sponsored cycle ride, raising more than £800 for the Trust and the Olive Harvest Trust; while John Douglas is, at the time of writing, in the midst of running around, cycling around and canoeing across all 17 lakes in the Lake District (support him at www.justgiving.com/John-Douglas6).

To discuss fundraisings ideas, contact adam. pinder@johnmuirtrust.org, or call 01796 484965.



Suilven path in need of repairs

The Trust has committed to ensuring that the route to the summit of community-owned Suilven – one of Scotland's most distinctive mountains – remains in good condition

Working together with the Assynt Foundation, the community body that owns Suilven, the John Muir Trust has committed to a project to ensure the route to the summit of this much-loved mountain remains in good condition, and in keeping with the wild landscape in which it lies. The total project cost is likely to be around £200,000.

The Trust's commitment to this remarkable mountain comes in two ways: Chris Goodman, the Trust's path officer, will manage the work on the ground, while the Trust will also help get the project fully funded.

We'd like to thank all who voted for us to win £18,000 from the European Outdoor Conservation Association to contribute to these essential path repairs on Suilven. Scottish Natural Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund have committed the bulk of the funding as part of the wider Coigach and Assynt Living Landscapes Partnership, but we still need to find £50,000 to release all the money and fully fund the project so that it can begin later in the year.

If able to help, please make a donation and share this appeal with others who might also wish to assist. For more info, visit www.johnmuirtrust.org/suilven, or contact Julie on 01796 484961, email Julie.waugh@johnmuirtrust.org

Knoydart woodland appeal

The Trust would like to say a huge thank you to the hundreds of people who have donated to our planned woodland regeneration work on Knoydart (ongoing work that has altready seen us win a Scotland's Finest Woods Award in 2015).

We've been absolutely delighted by the response, and have now raised more than 80 per cent of the funds needed to plant 16 hectares of trees and protect them from browsing.

Lester Standen, the property manager, is keen to get started: "It's fantastic that so many people understand and value this magical place, and the amazing potential it has. We will work hard to bring back the wildlife and habitats as well as we can. Thanks for your donations, and of course also to all the volunteers, past, present and future!"

To find out more, please visit www.johnmuirtrust.org/ KnoydartAppeal, or call 01796 470080.

Wild Space in 2015

Our visitor centre in Pitlochry has enjoyed another excellent year, engaging with thousands of visitors and helping us build positive partnerships in the local community.

The Alan Reece Gallery hosted a range of striking exhibitions of paintings and photographs in 2015, culminating in spectacular seascapes of St Kilda by local artist Malize McBride (on display until early February). This will be followed in 2016 by Kaleidoscape in February/March, a collection of abstract paintings by record-breaking hill runner Finlay Wild, and Ascent in April/May - a powerful exhibit of mountain photography and words by Alastair Young.

Next time you are passing, please drop in to enjoy the artwork and browse our selection of books and other gifts!





Trust supports new photography award

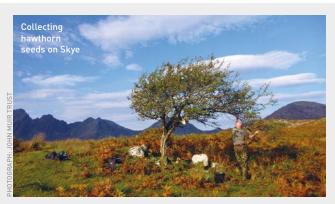
The Scottish Landscape Photographer of the Year competition had an extra category in 2015, with the Trust sponsoring a new award

The new award titled The Wild Places Prize for photography of Scotland's wild places will see 10 photographers receive prizes of John Muir Trust membership, an exclusive exhibition in the Trust's Wild Space gallery in Pitlochry, as well as each selected photograph being featured in the Journal.

"I'm delighted to have the support of the John Muir Trust for the competition," said Stuart Low, the competition founder. "As a landscape photographer, conservation is something that's very dear to me and because the Trust does such valuable work in preserving our wild places it means that photographers are able to capture our unspoilt beauty through their lenses.

The new award is truly a great prize because, as well as promoting conservation, it means that photographers entering the competition will get the chance to have their images put in front of more than 10,000 Trust members, raising their profiles considerably."

The winners in all 10 categories of the 2015 competition will be announced in January. www.slpoty.co.uk



Collecting native tree seeds for Kew

The John Muir Trust has teamed with Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in an exciting project to collect tree seeds from our various properties around Scotland. The project aims to establish a national collection of native tree seeds for long term conservation and research.

Collection of seeds began in late September when Schiehallion property manager Liz Auty and our intern, Jen Derr from Patagonia Inc, collected, dried and sorted more than 10,000 downy birch seeds. This was followed by a batch of hawthorn seeds, collected by Ally Macaskill (pictured), from the land we look after on Skye, plus holly seeds from Quinag. Find out more about the project at www.johnmuirtrust.org/kew



Westminster energy policy

The Trust has joined 13 organisations, in backing the Less Waste, More Growth: Boosting Energy Productivity report produced by the Association for Decentralised Energy. It's an important report that fits with our call for an affordable energy mix that meets our climate change targets and energy needs, but without permanently damaging wild land.

Meanwhile, debate about the UK government's withdrawal of onshore wind subsidies continued during the passage of the Energy Bill through Parliament, and we provided briefings to members of the House of Lords.

While welcoming some measures in the November announcement by the UK government, we would have liked more commitment to energy efficiency measures.

Campaigner WINNER of the year ... Outdoors Awards 2015

CAMPAIGN OR CAMPAIGNER

John Muir Trust

For the second year on the bounce, the John Muir Trust has won Campaigner of the Year in The Great Outdoors Awards 2015. A

delighted Helen McDade, the Trust's head of policy, collected the award at the Kendal Mountain Festival in November.

Thank you to all members and supporters for helping us make such spectacular progress over the past year – and, of course, to all readers of The Great Outdoors who voted for us!

Concern over several transmission line projects

Members have already been alerted to proposals for a chain of high-voltage power lines that would impact on the Lake District National Park and, more recently, plans to upgrade a transmission line in Dumfries & Galloway, where we recently visited the site and joined with more than 40 community councils in expressing concern.

A further proposed transmission line north of the Great Glen between Beauly and Loch Buidhe could also have a dramatic impact on wild land. One concern is that much of the infrastructure proposed by the developer, SSE, is based on speculative wind farm proposals which are not yet approved.

On a more positive note, SSE has launched a six-month consultation to identify distribution power lines in National Parks and National Scenic Areas within the north of Scotland which can be undergrounded. Learn more at www.ssepd.co.uk/undergrounding/north

Policy briefs

- The Trust attended several major autumn party political conferences, holding fringe events highlighting the value of landscapes at three of them together with the Campaign to Protect Rural England and the National Trust.
- A three-strong panel has been appointed by the Scottish Government to conduct a thorough review of Scottish planning, with a primary focus on housing development. The final report is due in March.
- In November, Peter Pearson and Helen McDade attended the Scottish launch of the Response for Nature report, while Sheila Wren spoke at its London launch. The report flags the governmental actions needed to respond to the parlous state of wildlife.

Award survey results

A 2015 survey of Provider organisations in Scotland highlights that the John Muir Award is helping to deliver the Trust's vision that wild places are valued by all sectors of society. Of the 67 Providers who responded, 94 per cent said the Award helps the people they work with value wild places, while 89 per cent reported that it helps people put something back for wild places. Find out more at www.johnmuirtrust.org/ awardsurveyresults

Scottish schools take-up

The Trust is now working with 40 per cent of all secondary schools in Scotland (and over 400 schools in total) through the John Muir Award. In the 2014-15 academic year, 13,468 Awards were achieved by pupils and teachers - an 8 per cent increase over the previous year.

Meanwhile, 24 per cent of all Awards (3,196) were gained by pupils experiencing some form of disadvantage. Links with schools in England are up by more than 50 per cent on 2014, too.

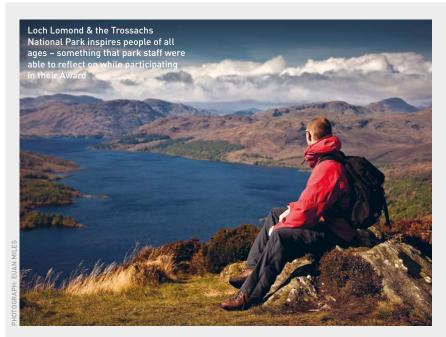
Park hits 10k milestone

The 10,000th John Muir Award to be achieved through a partnership between the John Muir Trust and the Lake District National Park was celebrated at a recent ceremony attended by St Oswald's Primary School, Kendal and its Award Provider, Cumbria Outdoors. Sixteen young people were presented with John Muir Award certificates after spending a week with Cumbria Outdoors exploring, climbing, canoeing and clearing bracken.



Positive partnering

The Trust's Toby Clark (pictured) recently collected the Scottish Local Partner of the Year award from UK-wide employability charity Tomorrow's People for our work at Glenlude through the John Muir Award. Galashiels Works! - an employability programme in the Scottish Borders - nominated the Trust following a successful year of partnership and volunteering at our Glenlude property.



Award in action

Case studies are a great way to see the Trust's engagement initiative in action. The following highlights the sheer variety of people who recently completed their John Muir Award

Wirral Autistic Society volunteers developed skills by working with the Wirral Coastal Rangers to rewild a local country park. Kevin Mulligan, head of the community development team, said: "Our team is here to help adults with autism engage with the community through partnerships and creative activities. The service users decided that they wanted to take on this project and then completed it with great determination. We're incredibly proud of them.

Royden Park Project enabled adults with learning difficulties in the Wirral to transform a walled garden, as one of the project leaders explained: "Alongside the exploration of the garden, we learned about John Muir: his childhood in Scotland, his emigration to America, and his life of discovery and conservation. Our wild place is not as grand as Yosemite, but we have begun to care for it through our Conserve

Pupils at Shirland Primary School in the Peak District completed their Discovery Award during a summer term bursting with outdoor activity. Deputy head Mrs Hukins said: "We had so many ideas and this framework gave us the freedom to go with them all. We wanted pupils to feel awe and wonder in the natural world - to be challenged, to get active and to learn. But above all we wanted pupils to have fun!" A Year 6 pupil added: "Exploring the Peak District made us feel free, excited and very proud, especially when we hiked to the top of hills and mountains."

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park staff gained a new perspective of the National Park and their work there. Alison Cush, education and inclusion advisor, said: "We sat in the sun talking about how beautiful it was, and remembered the reasons that originally inspired us to work for the national park. We also talked about Muir and the purpose of national parks ... just the kind of stuff that never really comes up in the office."

Balshaw High School in Lancashire delivered the John Muir Award with an entire year group using the Year 7 geography curriculum. With a focus on the school grounds, students mapped diverse wild spaces using satellite images, while the exploring of different ecosystems and habitats helped them consider their own emotional connections with the environment.

For many more examples of how groups and individuals have worked with and benefited from the John Muir Award, plus films of the Award in action, please visit www.johnmuirtrust.org/in-action



Rosemary Fox

It's with great sadness that we learnt of the death recently of Rosemary Fox, a regular volunteer at many of our properties, including Glenlude.
Rosemary was somebody with a long history of involvement in the early days of youth hostelling, of campaigning for access rights, and sharing her love for the outdoors with people throughout her life. She will be much missed.

John Thomas

No members' wild days in 2016

There are no scheduled member tours in 2016. However, if you would like to take a guided tour around one of our properties, please contact Kate Barclay (kate.barclay@johnmuirtrust.org) and we'll try to accommodate your request.



Leaving a legacy to the Trust

Gifts in wills provide vital funding for the Trust. One long-time supporter, Keith Lawson, explained why he has chosen to support the Trust in this most special way: "We are used to seeing adverts in the shops saying 'when it's gone, it's gone', but unfortunately a great many people don't appreciate that this applies to our wild and remote areas, too. I have left a legacy to the John Muir Trust because I believe that wild places should be preserved for all future generations to marvel at. I urge others to do the same – it is an opportunity for all those that enjoy our land to make a real difference."

If you would like to discuss the possibility of leaving the Trust a gift in your will, please contact Adam Pinder on 01796 484 965, or adam.pinder@johnmuirtrust.org

Conservation work party dates 2016

Choose from a fantastic line-up of conservation work parties this year

1	J	
Date	Location	Proposed activity
26–28 February	Glenlude	Woodland
7–12 March	Knoydart Foundation, Inverie	Path work, rhoddie control and general
12–13 March	Li & Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart	Tree planting (requires wild camping)
26 March	East Schiehallion	Path work
1–4 April	Skye	Path work
14–17 April	Glenlude	Woodland, general
15-17 April	Li & Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart	Tree planting (requires wild camping)
25-30 April	Knoydart Foundation, Inverie	Path work, rhoddie control, general
6-8 May	East Schiehallion	Path work, general
9–13 May		Path work, beach cleaning, drystone walling, general
26-29 May	Sandwood	Path work, beach cleaning, general
4–5 June	Li & Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart	Woodland (requires wild camping)
11 June	Ben Nevis	Summit litter clean, path work
13-17 June	Quinag & CALL partners	Path work, woodland, general
23-26 June	Glenlude	Woodland, general
2–3 July	Li & Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart	Woodland (requires wild camping)
8–11 July	Glen Nevis	Monitoring, path work
9–10 July	Li & Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart	Woodland (requires wild camping)
30 July-1 August	East Schiehallion	Path work and general
3–6 August	Sandwood	Path work, beach cleaning and general
10-13 August	Glenlude	Woodland and general
20 August	Ben Nevis	Summit litter clean, path work
22-26 August	Quinag & CALL partners	Path work, woodland, general
29 August–2 September	Western Isles, North & West Harris Trusts	Path work, beach cleaning, drystone walling, general
9–12 September	Nevis Partnership	Tree planting at Polldubh
17 September	Ben Nevis	Summit litter clean, path work
19-23 September	CALL, Tanera Mor	Path work, woodland, general
24 September	East Schiehallion	Path work
1–2 October	Li & Coire Dhorrcail, Knoydart	Woodland (requires wild camping)
27–30 October	Glenlude	Woodland, general
12–13 November	Glenlude	Woodland, general

Find out more at www.johnmuirtrust.org/support-us/volunteer To keep up-to-date with work parties, join our email listing at workparties@johnmuirtrust.org, or contact Sandy Maxwell, Top Right 69 Hyndland Street, Glasgow G11 5PS t. 07766 380663

Action-packed autumn for Members' Groups

From removing invasive species to building brash hedges, members performed fantastic conservation work last autumn, as well as meeting for a range of talks and discussions.

In the North East of Scotland, work parties held at the Glen Tanar, Mar Lodge and Balmoral Estates as well as Portlethen Moss have kept local members busy. And at the autumn meeting, James Brownhill shared how his experience of walking the John Muir Way and the Tour du Mont Blanc allowed him to feel more connected to John Muir himself.

The first annual gathering of the newly formed North West England group took place in October with 50 people in attendance. A range of speakers from the Trust and other organisations spoke on issues affecting wild land in North West England, generating lively discussion. A group of members also volunteered in the restoration project underway at Hardknott Forest following the meeting.

Elsewhere, November saw the 25th anniversary of the Southern Members' Gathering and featured speakers from the Trust as well as the Brecon Beacons National Park and the North Somerset National Trust. A producer from the BBC wildlife unit also gave an inspiring illustrated presentation.

The Edinburgh local group also held its annual meeting in November and welcomed speakers from the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland and from the Borders local group. Alan Rowan, author and a mountain fanatic, spoke about the challenges of climbing the Munros by moonlight. And as he steps down from his role as local group co-ordinator, staff and members joined to thank Richard Ellis for his contribution over many years.



Tell us your news!

What have Trust members and local groups been up to? Tell us your news and stories. Email **emma.cessford**@ johnmuirtrust.org

The John Muir Trust Members News is printed on Cocoon offset, which is an FSC-certified recycled grade paper, containing 100% post consumer waste and manufactured at a mill accredited with ISO14001 environmental management standard. The pulp used in this product is bleached using an Elemental Chlorine Free process. We use a Scottish printer with excellent environmental credentials.

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COVER BANNER IMAGE: FOX ON THE PROWL, DANNY GREEN/2020VISION

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

North East Scotland

16 January, 20 February, 19 March, 16 April - Glen Tanar work parties. To volunteer, email james@brownhill.us Dates for work parties on the Mar Lodge and Balmoral Estates plus Portlethen Moss are still to be confirmed, so check our website for details.

19 April - presentation by Chris Townsend, Trustee. To register your interest, email r.beyts@btinternet.com

North West England

18 - 20 March - Conservation work party at Hardknott Forest, including native tree planting. To volunteer, email D.V.Spracklen@leeds.ac.uk

Visit our website for further details of all events!

Membership cards and offers

We're delighted to provide a range of fantastic member offers. However, to ensure that more of your contribution goes directly to protecting wild places, we're no longer producing membership cards. For more on taking up our range of offers, visit www.johnmuirtrust.org/ member-offers or email promotions@ johnmuirtrust.org

Members' survey - input invited

We are reviewing the way we communicate with members and are keen to hear your thoughts. We'd be very grateful if you could take a few moments to complete our survey at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ **JMT**membernews

Keep in touch

- Sign up to our monthly e-newsletter by emailing membership@ johnmuirtrust.org
- Keep up-to-date on events and local activities at www.johnmuirtrust.org/ latest/events
- Follow us online via Facebook and Twitter @JohnMuirTrust
- You can also choose to receive your Journal and Members' News electronically by emailing membership@johnmuirtrust.org