
Adventure grant supports young woman to explore the wild places of Scotland.

21st August 2022

Gap year student undertakes solo journey by bike and foot to explore the wild places of Scotland, funded by the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace grant.

Jane Williamson, a 19 year old gap year student from Middlesex, was inspired to explore a more 'nature centric' lifestyle following a school project on how biodiversity in nature underpins human health. Jane grew up in the North of Scotland, nurturing a love of wild places from a young age. She is a member of UK Youth for Nature, campaigning to put nature on the political agenda, and will take up a place to study Biology at the University of St Andrews in September 2022.

Jane started her adventure in June and spent 6 weeks travelling through the Scottish Highlands on a route connecting wild places. Along her journey Jane visited sites where work is already underway to help ecosystems thrive, including land protected and managed by the John Muir Trust such as; Sandwood Bay, Quinag, Skye, Knoydart and Ben Nevis. Jane named her adventure 'Reroute' and hopes it will inspire herself and others to make daily lifestyle changes that will 'reroute' our current trajectory towards complete climate and ecological breakdown. The trip itself was designed to have minimal environmental impact, followed Leave No Trace principles and used plastic free supplies as far as possible. Inspired by authors and environmentalists such as, Nan Shepherd, Robert Macfarlane and John Muir, Jane is now hoping to turn her experiences into a book.

On receiving the news of the grant offer Jane said: "Knowing that Reroute has the generous support of the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant makes all the difference in the world. The wild places loved by Des Rubens and Bill Wallace need us to fight their corner in this vital decade for nature, and I hope that Reroute can be a small part of this mindset shift, in their legacy."

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 Jane on her solo adventure around Scottish Highlands, highlighting the importance of wild place. They were particularly impressed by her passion, self-motivation and plans to minimise the environmental impact of her journey."

Jane is one of eight successful applicants to the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant in 2022. 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 the John Muir environmental award scheme.

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 footsteps and experience wild places. Projects should be adventurous, have an educational or scientific component and benefit the wild places themselves. In the decade since its inception the grant has made over 60 awards to a wide variety of recipients.

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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