

# Press Release

JOHN  
MUIR  
TRUST

## Adventure grant supports research trip to the rainforest.

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A Zoology student from Glasgow University will travel to Guyana to survey butterflies and moths, with funding support from the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant.



From July, Iris Gray, will spend 7 weeks in the Kanuku Mountains Protected Area (KMPA) of Guyana updating the species list of butterflies and moths who make their home in the rainforest habitat. The ability of this rainforest region to sustain a wide variety of wildlife is being threatened by climate change and the impacts of human activities. Studying the butterfly and moth populations will provide essential data so scientifically informed decisions can be made to help assist conservation efforts. With an all-time high rate of rainforest degradation in the area this work is more important

than ever. The project will work alongside the Protected Areas Commission (PAC), the Guyanese governmental body in charge of managing protected natural areas.

Iris is a member of the University of Glasgow's Exploration Society and is looking forward to staying deep in the rainforest, surrounded by an ecosystem overflowing with exotic species. Iris hopes the fieldwork experience she gains from the trip will prove invaluable as she moves forward in her Zoology career. On receiving the news of the grant offer Iris said: "I am absolutely over the moon to have received a grant from the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant. It will aid myself and my fellow team members to carry out important investigations into the wildlife of the Kanuku Mountains Protected Area of Guyana. The research inform vital conservation efforts, and contribute to the protection of this amazing ecosystem."

Jenny Seaman of the John Muir Trust, who administers the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant said: "The grant panel were impressed by Iris's well-planned research and are delighted to be able to support her fieldwork."

Iris 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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