

Press Release

JOHN
MUIR
TRUST

Adventure Grant supports aspiring mountaineer to traverse the Julian Alps, Slovenia.

04 April 2023

Ben Stainton, will undertake a 2-week traverse of the Julian Alps to increase his understanding of wild places, with funding support from the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant.



Ben Stainton, aged 23 from Glasgow, is a student of landscape architecture with a particular interest in ecological restoration and rewilding. Ben is also training to be a Mountain Leader and a traverse of the Julian Alps in August will be an opportunity to put his skills into action. Ben's route will include the site of the Triglav Glacier which has all but disappeared over the last century. Ecosystems across the world are under strain from climate and land-use change, with montane ecosystems particularly affected. In order to manage these challenges it is crucial that eco-systems are accurately monitored. Ben will work with expedition partner, Patch Tully, to make observations of land use and vegetation cover. These will be compared to estimations produced through GIS-analysed satellite data to understand how accurate this technology is in representing the condition of wild places.

On receiving the news of the grant offer Ben said: "I am delighted to have been awarded a Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant. This has made possible a two-week expedition in the Julian Alps, studying landscape ecology along the route. I will be working alongside my expedition partner Patch Tully, whose GIS expertise will allow us to map our observations of landscape ecology along the route. We hope this experience will help us develop the skills needed to pursue careers in the conservation of wild places."

Jenny Seaman of the John Muir Trust, who administers the Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant said: "The grant panel are delighted to be able to support Ben's mountaineering expedition which combines the spirit of adventure with meaningful benefits for the conservation of wild places."

Ben 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>

Contact

Jenny Seaman

Des Rubens and Bill Wallace Grant Administrator

t: 01796 470080 e: jenny.seaman@johnmuirtrust.org

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