John Muir Award
Information Handbook

All you need to know to run the John Muir Award - for leaders, teachers and volunteers

The John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme focused on wild places.

It encourages people to connect with, enjoy and care for the natural environment.

www.johnmuiraward.org
The John Muir Award challenges you to

- **Discover** a wild place
  – on your doorstep or further afield

- **Explore** it

- **Do something to Conserve** it

- **Share** your experiences

This Information Handbook is also available as a downloadable pdf at [www.johnmuiraward.org](http://www.johnmuiraward.org).

Visit our website for news, resources, and a range of case studies highlighting the John Muir Award in action.
You are warmly invited to participate in the John Muir Award. This Information Handbook will guide you through your involvement.

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The John Muir Award is the main educational initiative of the John Muir Trust, and is supported by funding from a range of sources including Heritage Lottery Fund, Scottish Natural Heritage, Lake District National Park Authority and Cairngorms National Park Authority.
The John Muir Award encourages people of all ages and backgrounds to connect with, enjoy and care for the planet’s wild places. It does this through a structured yet adaptable scheme.

It was launched in 1997 by the John Muir Trust, which was formed in 1983 to safeguard and conserve wild places in the United Kingdom. The John Muir Trust’s vision is that:

Wild places are valued by all, and
Wild land is protected and enhanced throughout the United Kingdom.

The John Muir Award is its main educational initiative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The John Muir Award was set up to</th>
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<tr>
<td>• promote educational, social and personal development through engagement with wild places and involvement in conservation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• encourage an environmental agenda within organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• ensure that social circumstances don’t exclude people from opportunities to experience wild places</td>
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The John Muir Award is delivered through partnerships with youth organisations, schools, clubs, Local Authorities, residential and outdoor centres etc. With advice and assistance from John Muir Award staff, these ‘Award Providers’ integrate the Award structure with their own outdoor and environmental activities to enable their participants, students and members to achieve their own John Muir Award.

Individuals, families and small groups of all ages and backgrounds also take part in the John Muir Award.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement in the John Muir Award sets out to do 3 things</th>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Acknowledge</strong> what organisations and individuals <strong>already do</strong>, in terms of responsible outdoor and environmental activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Encourage</strong> more awareness and responsibility, promoting a <strong>holistic approach</strong> to experiencing wild places</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Celebrate</strong> what is achieved</td>
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What is it and how does it work?
Award Challenges & Levels

The John Muir Award is a scheme that supports connections with and care for nature, landscape, and the natural environment - wild places.

Four Challenges are at the heart of the John Muir Award. They are designed to promote a holistic approach, and reflect John Muir’s wilderness experiences.

By ‘holistic’ we mean experiences that include Awareness, Understanding, and Action.

To achieve a John Muir Award at any Level, each individual participant engages in a range of activities that embrace the following four Challenges:

- Discover a wild place
- Explore its wildness
- Conserve a wild place
- Share your experiences

See pages 8-9 for more on these Challenges.

The three Levels of the John Muir Award – Discovery Level, Explorer Level, and Conserver Level – encourage a progressive involvement.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discovery Award</th>
<th>Explorer Award</th>
<th>Conserver Award</th>
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<tr>
<td>4 days (or equivalent) minimum time commitment</td>
<td>8 days (or equivalent) minimum time commitment</td>
<td>20 days (or equivalent) time commitment, over at least 6 months</td>
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The same four Challenges are repeated for each Level, with increased involvement in terms of time, activity, responsibility and ownership.
## Benefits to individuals

- Challenge and adventure, from being in wild places
- Environmental awareness from exploring such areas
- Knowledge and skills gained from experience in the outdoors and involvement in conservation activities
- Shared experiences with friends, colleagues and role models
- Opportunities to take responsibility for change at a local and national level
- Teamwork skills, from planning, decision-making and completing expeditions, conservation projects etc.
- Confidence and communication skills from sharing experiences and knowledge with a wider audience
- Material to include in c.v.s and Records of Achievement
- A nationally-recognised certificate for each participant and for each John Muir Award level attained
- Help promote physical activity and relaxation

## Benefits to organisations

- A tried and tested way to incorporate an environmental agenda with existing activity
- Recognition for current outdoor/environmental activity
- A holistic approach, with an easy-to-use, adaptable structure
- Enhanced environmental awareness
- A progressive structure, through three levels, to maintain and develop involvement and activity
- A flexible scheme for schools to deliver Curriculum activities – a framework that supports cross-curricular activities
- Training and development opportunities for staff, leaders, teachers and volunteers
- Participation in a prestigious, nationally recognised Award scheme
- Use of the John Muir Award logo
- Certificate of recognition as an Award Provider
John Muir Award Ethos

The John Muir Award is designed to be accessible and encouraging.

The John Muir Award is

• Open and welcoming to all, regardless of age, sex, race, class or ability (NB see ‘Who takes part?’ on page 7)
• Focused on wild places
• Non-competitive
• Fun and adventurous
• Challenging and progressive
• Established to encourage personal responsibility for wild places
• Designed to promote personal development
• An opportunity to explore values and spirituality
• Designed to be delivered in partnerships
• Relevant to wider issues and contexts

John Muir Award Criteria

To achieve a John Muir Award, participants must

• Tackle all four Challenges – Discover, Explore, Conserve, Share
• Complete the required time commitment
• Show enthusiasm and commitment towards their Award involvement
• Have an awareness of John Muir, his life and achievements
• Understand outdoor access issues relevant to location and activities undertaken
• Comply with all Health and Safety and insurance requirements of the organisation delivering Award activities. If applicable, participants may wish to be covered by their own personal insurance

For most individuals, the Discovery Award will be completed as an introduction to the Award scheme. It is possible to proceed directly to the Explorer or Conserver Award if a Proposal is sufficiently challenging and meets the time requirements. This must be discussed with Award staff before proceeding.

The time requirement should be seen as a minimum. It can be met by combining hours, sessions, or residential days. There is no upper limit on this time commitment. Time can’t be carried forward to the next level of the Award.

Awards can’t be made retrospectively – a Proposal Form should be submitted 2 weeks before the start of John Muir Award activity.
Who takes part?

The John Muir Award is open to all, however there should be an ability to meet its Criteria. In our experience we would advise that the John Muir Award is not suitable for nursery groups or lower primary level. Younger children are welcome to participate in Family Awards. If you are unsure about its suitability for your group see the Get Involved pages at www.johnmuiraward.org and speak to a member of Award staff.

Participation can be through involvement in an organisation that is established as an Award Provider (see below) or as an individual or small independent group or family.

Groups

Typically, groups such as

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Youth Organisations</th>
<th>Ranger Services</th>
<th>Environmental Organisations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Outdoor &amp; Residential Centres</td>
<td>Councils</td>
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</table>

run the John Muir Award for pupils, volunteers, members, participants. (Leaders, teachers, Rangers, and instructors are invited to actively participate and achieve their own Award too…)

When organisations are familiar with the process of participation described on page 10, they can complete a Provider Agreement with an Award staff member to become established as an Award Provider.

What if I’m not part of a Group?

Individuals and families and small independent groups who wish to use the John Muir Award structure as part of their own projects, trips and adventures are welcome to do so. A completed Proposal Form is all that's required – see page 10 for more information.
Explore it

How will you get to know your wild place?
Explore its wildness. Tune in, understand and appreciate it. Experience it, travel extensively through it, become familiar with it, maybe in different seasons and weather conditions, at various times of day, or in different company…

‘Wildness is not only a property of land – it is also a quality which can settle on a place with a snowfall or with close of day.’
Robert Macfarlane

Walk, camp or canoe…or just sit and look.
Use environmental games, scavenger hunts or activities that engage the senses to help your understanding of a place. Make a map, collect historical information or conduct a wildlife survey. Identify plants, animals, birds. Take photographs, videos or sound diaries. Paint, draw or model plants, animals and landscapes. Keep a nature diary or scrap book.

What makes it wild? Is it a special place - why? How do wild things (plants, animals, insects, birds, people) depend on each other? How is it affected by people?

‘I learned very early the difference between knowing the name of something and knowing something.’
Richard Feynman, American Physicist
Conserve it

**How will you take some personal responsibility for your wild place?**

Leave it in better shape, by practical conservation action, by supporting a relevant issue, or minimising impact and integrating Outdoor Access principles.

Activities might include wildlife surveys, litter cleanups, planting trees, shrubs or wildflowers, or clearing invasive plants. Make a nature trail or a tree trail. Provide water, bat boxes or nest boxes. Clean up a pond or river. Campaign by writing to local councillors, MPs and newspapers, or research and fundraise for a place or issue.

‘...it is not enough for people to be in sympathy with the plight of the natural world, they must become ‘active conservationists’, as campaigners, as practical project workers, as scientists, as artists, as writers.’

*John Muir*

Share your experiences

**How will you let others know about your achievements?**

Discuss, review and share your experiences as your activity progresses. This can be informally, as well as through more organised ways of sharing.

Make an exhibition of photos, paintings, drawings, or words. Organise a presentation with slides or photos. Make a film for our YouTube channel. Keep a group diary, do some drama or poetry, or create some environmental art. Lead a guided walk around the place where you’ve been completing your Award. Share your experience of nature with each other, friends and family.

‘Each individual took something different from their John Muir Award experience, they each had a different story to tell.’

*Kay Clark, Inverclyde Youth Connections Manager*

These Challenges reflect the approach that John Muir took during his travels and adventures. They promote a holistic approach to outdoor experiences. Muir was always keen to find new areas, or to see familiar places in a different light. He promoted the idea of conserving areas of wilderness and beauty, and shared his experiences and vision.
How to get involved...
A guide to setting up your John Muir Award

1 Plan your activity
Visit www.johnmuiraward.org or contact John Muir Award staff for information and advice. Involve your members/participants in planning if appropriate – make sure they are keen to get involved. Integrate what you already do with the four Award Challenges, or use these as a framework for your activity. Seek out local information and advice, and any permission required for outdoor access.

2 Submit a Proposal Form at least 2 weeks before starting
Use the John Muir Award Proposal Form (online or from Award staff) to outline your activity and describe how you will meet the four Award Challenges. You can treat this as a draft for further discussion – it’s not a pass or fail exercise! Email or post a copy to your nearest Award office at least 2 weeks before starting.

3 John Muir Award staff will contact you
We’ll discuss your Proposal by phone, email or in person, and suggest some changes or offer guidance if necessary. If Award Criteria are met (see page 6) we’ll register your Proposal and give you the go ahead. We’ll send a Record Book (e-version or hard copy) for each participant if required.

4 Go for it!
Make sure that you introduce the John Muir Award at an early stage to all individuals involved. There’s a film to help with this (on our ‘About the Award’ web pages or on dvd).

5 Review your John Muir Award activity
Was your activity completed as outlined in your Proposal Form? Have the Award Criteria been met by all participants? A Four Challenge Review can help with this. Seek guidance from Award staff if necessary.

6 Request John Muir Award Certificates at least 2 weeks before you need them
Download a Certificate Request Form or have one sent. Names can be submitted by e-mail (preferred) or by post. Please give 2 weeks notice to prepare and return the certificates to you.

7 Present your John Muir Awards
Celebrate and promote the achievements of participants. Invite parents, stakeholders, colleagues, families, local councillors, media etc.... and make it an event to remember. Press release guidance is available from Award staff – please let us see drafts of publicity material. Copies of articles are appreciated.
The John Muir Award for individuals & families

Whilst the John Muir Award operates largely through established organisations (Award Providers), many individuals, families and small independent groups also participate.

It’s easy to do, and just applies the same process outlined on page 10. Activities that might contribute include:

- A series of family outings
- Working towards a Duke of Edinburgh’s Award
- A college, club or University expedition
- An environmental or outdoor hobby e.g. climbing, birdwatching, sailing, hillwalking….  
- Educational or training courses e.g. drystone walling, Mountain Leadership, plant or bird identification, interpretation techniques…
- Creative activities – painting, drawing, photography, film-making, writing articles or poems…
- Volunteering for local or national conservation issues
- Making a presentation or slide show

Families can collectively meet Award Challenges to achieve a family certificate rather than individual ones.

‘Doing the John Muir Award as a family enabled our children to discover their land in new ways that mean something to them.’

Pete Crane, Visitor Services Manager, Cairngorms National Park
This ‘Heart, Head, Hand’ model outlines a supporting approach to the John Muir Award. It proposes that an experience-based programme of activity should encourage people to Care, promote Understanding and give opportunities for practical Doing.

Heart
Develop strong feelings about nature, or about a particular place. People will care about it, want to know more, and want to do something to protect it.

Head
Understand and develop knowledge about nature and wildness, the interdependence of living systems, and the threats to wild places. This will encourage a sense of responsibility and stronger feelings.

Hand
Get actively involved and take practical action for a place or issue. A sense of ‘putting something back’ helps people to enjoy and value the experience more.
What the John Muir Award provides

**Structure**
The John Muir Award structure - Discover, Explore, Conserve, Share - enables a wide range of activities to contribute towards the achievement of Awards. We provide this as a supported framework, with a range of support materials about all aspects of involvement in the John Muir Award. Once a Proposal has been registered, Award Providers and participants implement their own Award activity.

**Guidance, support & advice**
John Muir Award staff are available to provide guidance, at an appropriate level, in support of Award activity. Staff are experienced in discussing ways of integrating the Award so that it enhances the current provision of an organisation. Knowledge and expertise can also be sourced from a wide network of contacts and from other Award Providers, covering areas such as environmental issues, outdoor learning and curriculum links.

**Training**
Training is not essential to run the John Muir Award – reading this Handbook should be enough, as a starting point. A series of training events are programmed to provide leaders with opportunities to learn more about the John Muir Award, build confidence in its delivery and network with other Providers. (See page 16)

**Website**
Here’s what you can access at [www.johnmuiraward.org](http://www.johnmuiraward.org).

- **Information Handbook** – all you need to know to run the John Muir Award.
- **John Muir Award YouTube Channel** – including an introductory John Muir Award film, and films of Provider activity.
- **Case Studies** – gain ideas, be inspired, hear how others do it, see what works…View a wide selection of case studies under themes of: Youth Sector; Schools and Colleges; Adult Groups; Individuals and Families.
- **Proposal Form** – for planning, registering and delivering your John Muir Award.
- **Certificate Request Form** – as you complete your activity, email this to your Regional Manager.
Resources to support your participation

Background to the John Muir Award, standard documents, resource guides and up-to-date information can be found at www.johnmuiraward.org. Case studies and examples of Award activities are regularly shared here.

General publicity and information leaflets about the John Muir Award and the work of the John Muir Trust can be provided on request. A film giving an introduction to John Muir, the John Muir Trust, and the John Muir Award is available on dvd or via the John Muir Award website.

**Information Handbook**

This Handbook is available to leaders, teachers, staff and volunteers who are interested or involved in running John Muir Award activities. It also gives guidance to individuals, families and small groups who wish to participate. It can be downloaded in pdf form from the Resources section of the John Muir Award website.

**Record Books**

Record Books give each participant an opportunity to capture their John Muir Award experiences. Each will be unique, and can incorporate drawings, painting, poetry etc. They should not be used to formally monitor or assess involvement. The Record Book can be used by individuals to track their progress through the three levels of Award. Background information on the John Muir Award is included, highlighting the four Award Challenges, its three levels, and the time commitments for each.

They are available as wire-bound booklets, or ask your Award contact for an electronic version. We do not currently charge for Record Books, however contributions to costs of production and postage are appreciated.

Award Providers should manage the use of Record Books in a way that is most suitable to the group e.g. distribute them or keep them centrally; set ‘Record Book’ time aside… We ask that leaders monitor their distribution, and encourage their use in a way that supports and enhances Award involvement.

There is no need to return Record Books to us when they have been used – they are a personal memento for each individual.

**Certificates**

Certificates celebrate the achievement of each individual, and are given to all participants and leaders for each level of the John Muir Award that is completed. The level achieved – Discovery, Explorer or Conserver - is depicted by a differently coloured certificate and Muir quote.

Certificates of recognition are awarded to organisations as they become established as Award Providers (by completing a Provider Agreement – see page 43).
Roles and Responsibilities

Award Providers - Leaders & Organisations
Leaders – youth workers, teachers, volunteers - are the key to successful delivery of the John Muir Award with groups. Responsibilities of the Award Provider include using the process outlined on page 10, ensuring that Award Criteria are met, and that each participant meets the four Challenges.

Crucially, the ethos of the Award should be communicated, ensuring that each participant takes part willingly, and learns and benefits from their participation. Leaders ensure that commitments in the Provider Agreement (page 43) are upheld.

Safety
In providing activities that contribute towards the achievement of the John Muir Award, it is the responsibility of the Award Provider (and those participating on an individual basis) to ensure that adequate safety procedures are in place. This may include Health and Safety Regulations, and insurance. Any activities provided directly by the John Muir Award (e.g. training) will adhere to the John Muir Trust Safety Policy (available on request).

John Muir Award Staff
Our staff are responsible for the integrity and administration of the John Muir Award. They promote and manage the scheme and support leaders, groups and individuals delivering and participating in the Award. They can offer guidance, advice and suggestions at the planning stage. They can suggest others who may be able to help to run the Award. Staff are available to give support or clarification over the phone or by e-mail; they may visit before or during a project, or attend an Award presentation. They also ensure that Provider Agreement commitments are upheld.

The John Muir Trust and key partners
The John Muir Trust (along with partner organisations who employ John Muir Award staff) provides financial and managerial support for the John Muir Award, and oversees its management.
Leaders with the necessary skills, knowledge and attributes are integral to the delivery of the John Muir Award. These leaders may already be working with young people in youth organisations, schools or environmental groups, or they may wish to become involved in delivering the Award as active volunteers.

To maintain the philosophy of the Award and provide a quality experience for all participants, a structured training programme has been developed for those interested in leading John Muir Award activities. This is in addition to information and resources that are designed to give enough guidance to deliver the John Muir Award – attending training is not a requirement to run the John Muir Award.

Training courses enable leaders to find out more about the practicalities of delivering the John Muir Award, network with other Providers, and develop their skills and confidence in relation to environmental education, youth work and leadership.

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<tr>
<th>Who for</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Time, format</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader Training</td>
<td>Leaders, staff, volunteers wishing to run the Award with a group</td>
<td>Leading others to achieve John Muir Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Training</td>
<td>Leaders already familiar with the John Muir Award</td>
<td>Themes relevant to John Muir Award activity and delivery, such as Biodiversity, Outdoor Access</td>
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‘I enjoyed the day…it was really inspiring to see what people are doing…It was fun, punchy, and all round a very positive day’

Training Course participant
The John Muir Award is a unique experience for each individual that participates, and every Award Provider delivers it in a way that’s unique to them. This is due to the many different locations used and the wide range of activities carried out in meeting Award Criteria. It isn’t a set programme or syllabus.

Whilst this flexibility is a key strength and appeals to Providers, it is essential to maintain an overall integrity in the delivery of John Muir Award experiences. A number of measures aim to support Award staff and Providers, without creating excessive paperwork or overly formal systems.

The **John Muir Award Proposal Form** outlines planned activity and is used to register the interest of an organisation or individual. It encourages a planning process that integrates the four Challenges of the Award. It is an important reference point for all involved, and enables Award staff to confirm that Criteria will be met, or give guidance and advice if appropriate.

A **Provider Agreement** is made between Award Providers and the John Muir Award, outlining mutual expectations and good practice. Review meetings take place regularly between active Award Providers and Award staff, giving opportunities to confirm that Criteria are being met, and to explore and resolve any issues relating to Award provision.

**Record Books** (page 14) are used by individuals to capture their experiences and express themselves. These can be used to informally monitor enthusiasm and commitment towards Award activities but should not be used for formal assessment.

A **Four Challenge Review** can be used to informally audit experiences to see the extent to which John Muir Award Challenges are being/have been met.

A **structured training programme** is available for all those interested in leading John Muir Award activities. It is designed to ensure that leaders have suitable skills, knowledge, and understanding of how the Award works. Tailored ‘in-service’ training events can also be designed for organisations to promote consistency of Award delivery amongst a number of staff.

The continued success of the John Muir Award relies on the motivation of key staff and volunteers within Provider organisations to deliver the Award to a high standard, such that each individual Award is meaningful and respected. There is an implicit trust that all involved will uphold the integrity of the John Muir Award.

John Muir Award staff are responsible for ensuring that this integrity is maintained, and reserve the right to withhold Certificates and Award Provider status.
Common Questions

Q **Is there an age limit for the John Muir Award?**
A We don’t impose age or category restrictions and in principle it is open to all. We value the support and understanding of Award Providers in working co-operatively with this approach. In practice, those participating should have a grasp of the Award and its Criteria. Our experience is that it isn’t suitable for nursery groups or lower primary groups. Please see guidance on the ‘Get Involved’ web page, and speak to your Award contact.

Q **How often are Awards presented?**
A Any time that fits in with the activities of an Award Provider. John Muir Award staff will provide Certificates at your request, with 2 weeks notice (see page 10).

Q **I don’t know much about conservation. How do I get started?**
A This shouldn’t be a barrier. John Muir Award staff will chat over the phone or by e-mail, visit you, or put you in touch with someone else who has worked with the Award locally. Most people can set up their activity based on their existing skills, or work with local Countryside Ranger Services, or learn about things as they progress. Click on the Conserve button on the John Muir Award home page for ideas.

Q **How does my group register as an Award Provider?**
A Just become familiar with the contents of this Information Handbook, and submit a John Muir Award Proposal Form. This will set you up as a ‘Supported Provider’. Once you/your own staff are confident in the delivery of the Award, we will set up a Provider Agreement, and present you with an ‘Award Provider’ Certificate.

Q **Is there someone who can help me with my project?**
A Award staff are always happy to offer advice over the phone. We can also try to put you in touch with a local contact who will be able to provide assistance. Local Countryside Ranger Services, conservation or wildlife groups and outdoor centres may be able to suggest suitable sites for activities and help with equipment.

Q **Do we have to pay for Award materials?**
A No, all support material, Record Books and Certificates are currently provided free of charge. We encourage membership of the John Muir Trust, either as an individual or as a group, as a way of supporting the John Muir Award. Donations towards resource costs are also appreciated.

Q **Who is responsible for insurance and safety?**
A The Award Provider is responsible (except for activities provided directly by the John Muir Award e.g. training).

Q **Who decides when we have completed the Award?**
A You do in the first instance, by comparing what’s been done with what was agreed on your Proposal Form. The relevant time requirement and the four Challenges (and Award Criteria generally) must have been met by each participant. Award staff will clarify any group or individual issues if necessary, and may on occasion ask for more to be done to meet Criteria, or withhold Certificates.
St. David’s Care in the Community, Pembrokeshire
Getting out and having fun!

Working in partnership with Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Ranger Service, a group of 14 residents enjoyed new experiences in Prendergast Woods near Solva. After spending time sitting quietly, listening and looking more closely at their surroundings, they learned to identify bird song of garden birds, including blue tits and robins, and also heard the call of buzzards. An underwater world of life was uncovered when ‘fishing’ in the river and an exciting discovery of otter spraint was found.

A fantastic display and presentation was held at Oriel y Parc, the National Park education and visitor centre. The group prepared a display board and gave a slide show and talk about the project, which allowed them to showcase their work and gain a sense of achievement.

“A wonderful scheme that can be tailored for people of all ages and abilities. Good fun and a great learning experience for all – you can’t beat it!”

Liz Taylor, Group Leader

London Wildlife Trust & North London Muslim Community Centre
Wild About Bushcraft

London Wildlife Trust is dedicated to protecting the capital’s wildlife and wild spaces, and engages many community groups in its work. This project, adapted to the structure of the John Muir Discovery Award, aimed to tackle gun, gang and knife crime by involving young people in outdoor activities close to the heart of Greater London, and on a residential weekend at Chase Nature Reserve in Dagenham. Camping (for the first time for 12 out of 14 of the group), lighting and managing camp fires responsibly, and preparing group meals together were all major outcomes. They learned about different types of plants and fungi along with their useful purpose and improved biodiversity at East Reservoir Community Garden by clearing invasive species such as bramble and dogwood. A short film of the project can be viewed at the John Muir Award YouTube channel.

“We linked values of nature conservation, and what John Muir encouraged, with the values the young people are taught within their community and by the Quran.”

Enric Cucarella, Outdoor Environmental Skills Project Coordinator

Case Studies…the John Muir Award in Action

An array of examples of how the John Muir Award looks in action can be found on the John Muir Award web pages. These highlight the diversity of groups, activity, locations and themes that are integrated.
Visiting their local woods every week from spring to summer, Primary 7 pupils built up a personal connection to the woods. The project helped inform learning back in the classroom, meeting specific curricula subject areas such as English through a group poem around an old tree, maths by estimating tree measurements and ages, and history by relating tree ages to poignant dates (WWI and II). Visiting the John Muir Birthplace Trust Museum helped give a sense of Muir’s life and reflections on nature.

A Wild Woods week involved the whole school in a week of learning in the woods. This amazing experience saw the pupils take part in orienteering and fitness, creating music using drums and percussion sounds, producing environmental art including their own bird’s nests, and finding out what lives in the woods through a Biofest Survey. Wider objectives were met too, supporting P7 pupils in their transition to High School, and consolidating parent involvement - the project was initiated and run by parent helpers with support from the school.

Working towards a nationally recognised Award helped raise the project’s profile and create local interest. For individual pupils reflecting on the four John Muir Award Challenges helped them to see how much they had learnt. But perhaps the most important benefit was “having FUN, learning together and sharing feelings”.

“In terms of personal development taking part in the John Muir Award has been great for building the confidence and self esteem of pupils who don’t always feel that they shine or succeed particularly well within a classroom situation, yet who have come into their own in the outdoors environment, with the different challenges”.

Ms Levi, P6/7 teacher

“We walked silently and found evidence that there were animals living there. We found that things are connected in the woods and that we are connected too”.

P7 Pupil
Durham County Council Family Learning’s six week nature courses for fathers and children mixed exciting activities, wild places and the John Muir Award. The result was an unforgettable experience which changed how the adults and young people engage with nature and with each other. They learnt about food chains, native wildlife, biodiversity and even animal droppings. Hands-on activities such as bark rubbing and creating birds’ nests were “very enjoyable and very interesting.” At each of 4 sites the families took personal responsibility for nature by planting trees and bulbs, constructing insect piles, participating in wildlife surveys, and making bird feeders and bat boxes.

Prior to their involvement the families rarely spent time outside together. One parent said he didn’t realise there were so many wild places on his doorstep which could be visited for free. As well as educating parents about activities to do and wild places to visit, the course helped parents feel more comfortable in the outdoors. Fathers witnessed the positive effect nature has on children’s behaviour firsthand. All these factors have motivated the families to spend more time outside.

The relationship between parent and child evolved throughout their John Muir Award experiences. Meeting the Award challenges together developed participants’ teamwork skills and resulted in improved communication within families. Children gained a new respect for their parents as they observed them taking a more active role in the environment. The programme helped reinforce ideas many of the young people had that their dad is a hero. Through spending quality time with their children in wild places fathers were able to appreciate their children’s abilities and interests. One father commented, “It has been a wonderful six weeks that my whole family has enjoyed.”

“The Family Learning course has encouraged my family to go out more and explore the surrounding area where we live.”
Parent
The Curriculum & the John Muir Award

‘First-hand experiences...can help to make subjects more vivid and interesting for pupils and enhance their understanding...[They can] make an important contribution to pupils’ future economic wellbeing and to preparing them for the next stage of their lives.’ Ofsted, 2008

The John Muir Award offers an ideal structure for contributing to the requirements of the Curriculum. It is appropriate for upper primary and secondary school pupils and can be used with whole year groups, class groups, small groups of learners, individuals and families.

Use the John Muir Award

- in experiential study of a specific subject area such as geography, science, social studies, art, music, English, maths and IT
- to help ‘join up’ interdisciplinary/cross curricular activity
- to give focus and structure to a residential course, field trip, or excursions to local areas, and help bridge remote and school-based activity
- to support learning themes and processes - such as outdoor learning, personal and health education, sustainable development, citizenship - by providing an experiential context
- as a framework for exploring people and place - John Muir makes an excellent national hero! (Who are our modern environmental role models?)
- to recognize wider achievement of pupils
- to support links between pupils and parents/carers

As well as linking with formal education strands, the John Muir Award can be used more informally too. It can be integrated into after-school and lunchtime clubs, extra-curricular activity such as the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, or school grounds projects. It can be used on a one-off basis, or as a progressive scheme over a year or more.

Pupils can receive a Record Book (hard copy or download version) to keep track of their involvement, and a nationally recognised award acknowledged by a certificate at the appropriate level. Experiences can be included in a student’s Record of Achievement and C.V.

Alternative Curriculum groups find that the John Muir Award gives an effective framework for activity, offering a focus that’s achievable and challenging for young people on their own terms.

Continuing Profession Development opportunities are available for education staff to introduce the relevant skills, knowledge and approaches for delivering the Award.
The John Muir Award website includes further information and case studies of schools using the Award.

“The John Muir Award offers an excellent framework for learning out of doors. Our pupils have had the opportunity to develop many diverse skills including planning, team working, IT and presentation, as well as hands-on skills in practical forest crafts. They have importantly also learned a lot about the natural environment within their own community. The John Muir Award hits a spot that is often missing in education today - it is a fun way to learn.”

Duncan Cameron – Lochaber Pupil Support Unit, Highland Council

England, Wales and Northern Ireland
The National Curriculum aims to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and to achieve. It promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life. The John Muir Award frames and supports meaningful learning in the outdoors (and indoors) for students of all abilities. It encourages the development of important life skills and a deeper understanding of core Curriculum subjects.

Scotland
Curriculum for Excellence places an emphasis on the development of the whole child to be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens. The focus is on developing skills for learning, life and work and recognising the breadth of young people’s achievement. The John Muir Award recognises and celebrates the wider achievement of young people beyond formal qualifications. Curriculum for Excellence also encourages an active, healthy and environmentally sustainable lifestyle. Implicit within this is the drive to encourage children and young people to learn beyond the classroom and this has increased the recognition of schemes that support outdoor learning such as the John Muir Award.

“The Award encourages active learning which is real, first hand and impacts positively on young people”.

Michael Will, Depute Head Teacher, Northfield Academy, Aberdeen
“Youth work” is defined as activities that intentionally seek to impact on young people (M. Smith, 2001). It is primarily a set of loosely affiliated activities, open to a number of definitions and interpretations.

Environmental Youth Work is ‘an approach that enables young people to understand the environment they live in and empowers them to effect and make changes that will result in a more sustainable way of life for all.’

Council for Environmental Education

Young people value experiences that

- are enjoyable, are active and ‘new’, and engage the senses
- leave them feeling uninhibited – setting their own agenda, being outdoors and close to nature, not being rushed
- feel authentic – relating to the hands-on nature of practical activity, exposure to the weather, not always knowing what will happen next, encounters with animals
- have a suitable balance of 3 dimensions – context/place, the activity itself, and the social aspect

Mannion et al, 2007

The John Muir Award adds value to youth work and promotes Environmental Youth Work by:

- Encouraging experiences of nature and the outdoors
- Giving a context for practical action for the environment
- Promoting opportunities to gain knowledge and skills
- Fostering a sense of responsibility
- Providing a framework and focus for a range of activity
- Offering links to networks and other (non-youth work) agencies
- Linking to other agendas
- Celebrating achievement

Whilst suitable for residential and extended trips, the John Muir Award can be particularly effective in encouraging young people to value their local environment. Community spaces can be utilized and waste grounds transformed for wildlife, biodiversity, relaxation and learning, without the need for transport or specialist skills.
The John Muir Award enables young people to ‘package’ a range of activities as a ‘Recorded Outcome’. A Recorded Outcome is one of the benchmarks used by Government to gauge whether the Youth Sector is meeting targets.

The John Muir Award is included in ‘Amazing Things - A guide to youth awards in Scotland’.

‘Many young people are content to volunteer without receiving any formal accreditation, however a growing number see the value of using their volunteering experience as a way of strengthening their C.V. and enhancing their career prospects.’

Amazing Things – a guide to the youth awards in Scotland.

‘More than 7 out of 10 young people say that making a difference in this world is important. In an era where much of the social dialogue suggests an apathetic, selfish generation, perhaps these findings directly from the minds and keyboards of young people encourage us to think again.’

nfpSynergy research, 2006

‘It is often the sheer enthusiasm and commitment of individual workers – paid and voluntary – that starts a new project. Until youth work and environmental organisations establish sustainable, effective partnerships, environmental youth work will rely on the imagination and personal motivation of individual workers – youth workers with an interest in the environment and environment workers who value young people.’

Best of Both Worlds 2002
Sustainability & the John Muir Award

The terminology relating to sustainability can be daunting – sustainable development, biodiversity enhancement, fight global warming and combat climate change, global citizenship, low carbon society… Another intimidating aspect is that the global environmental situation is so vast that many ask ‘how can I do anything about such a huge problem?’

Sustainability can refer to how biological systems – such as forests and wetlands - remain diverse and productive over time. For humans, sustainability refers to the long term maintenance of our wellbeing, which has environmental, social and economic dimensions.

Simply put, our understanding of ‘Sustainability’ is summed up as ‘Let’s live on the planet as if we mean to stay here.’

The Conserve Challenge of the John Muir Award promotes simple concepts of personal responsibility and ‘making a difference’ – these can be used to explore what ‘sustainability’ means in ways that are relevant to participants. (A wide range of Conserve activities can be found via the button on the John Muir Award home web page - see www.johnmuiraward.org/makeadifference for ideas and information).

The John Muir Award offers a context of having direct experiences of nature for exploring sustainability issues, rather than approach them in isolation. For example litter can impact on a wild place by endangering living things and making it look devalued finding out what the litter is and where it comes from can link this conservation issue with our own lives. Climbing a hill can involve a strenuous but rewarding journey; when enjoying the view at the top why not stop to think how far the contents of your packed lunchbox have travelled. Planning an expedition? What is your challenge?

‘As climbers and mountaineers, perhaps it’s time we started viewing the challenge of moving to a low-carbon style of adventure as an adventure in itself.’

Es Tresidder

John Muir Award activity can embrace not only conservation tasks, but considerations of our impact on wild places and wider environmental issues. Its framework encourages this activity to be delivered as an integral part of a programme, not just an ‘add-on’:

Responsibility & action
People enjoy doing things and putting something back – and enjoy this even more if they understand why they’re doing it and the benefits it generates.

‘The need to have people take personal actions that contribute to the solution of environmental problems has been widely recognised.’

M. McLaren
Impact
Considering our impact outside (and minimising this), and our impact at home, at school and at work can all contribute to John Muir Award activity.

‘There is a tendency for modern man to use the natural environment entirely for his own ends, and to be heedless of the consequences.’
 Colin Mortlock

Issues
John Muir Award experiences can be used to introduce concepts such as sustainability, biodiversity and access, rather than address them in isolation.
If a key aim is to develop environmental literacy

‘The first challenge...is to reconnect ourselves to the planet, to understand where things come from, where they go, and how much energy and material is used along the way.’
 M. McLaren

Conserve activity should reflect the interconnections of the ‘heart, hand, head’ model that underpins the approach of the John Muir Award (page 12).

Here are ‘10 Golden Rules’ that can help to communicate a ‘sustainability’ message:

• Keep it simple
• Frame people as part of the solution
• Make it enjoyable
• Focus on local – make nature and wildlife relevant to people’s everyday lives
• Popularize – understand and engage with the motivations and language of the people you work with
• Be positive and inviting – don’t leave people feeling helpless, or use guilt tactics
• Be topical and connected – relate to issues of health, technology, culture…
• Humanise – highlight people behind conservation success stories, through case studies and testimonials
• Showcase success
• Lead by example

Adapted from Newhaven Communications SNH Report 2007 and ‘Branding Biodiversity’, Futerra 2010

‘The ability to recognise issues and initiate solutions, and be motivated and committed to environmental matters are further traits of an environmentally literate citizen.’
 Danny Parkin
John Muir was inspirational in the foundation of national parks in America, anticipating many ideas of conservation and ecology. Since the first national park was established at Yellowstone in 1872 a global family of 6,555 protected areas covering 12% of the Earth’s surface has been created!

**National Parks in England and Wales**

These are areas of largely undeveloped and scenic landscape that are designated under the ‘National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949’. This paved the way for the majority of national parks to be established in the 1950s, with the Peak District, the Lake District, Snowdonia/Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri and Dartmoor being the first in 1951.

In England and Wales, designation as a national park can include large settlements and human land uses that are often integral parts of the landscape, and land within a national park remains largely in private ownership. There are currently 13 national parks in England (10) and Wales (3). Each is operated by its own Authority, with two “statutory purposes”:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the park’s special qualities by the public.

An estimated 110 million people visit each year. Recreation and tourism bring visitors and funds into the parks, to sustain their conservation efforts and support the local population through jobs and businesses. In 2010 10.7% of the area of England and Wales lay within national parks; the three Welsh national parks cover around 20% of the land area of Wales. There are, at present, no national parks in Northern Ireland.

“The essential requirements of a National Park are that it should have great natural beauty, a high value for open-air recreation and substantial continuous extent. Further, the distribution of selected areas should as far as practicable be such that at least one of them is quickly accessible from each of the main centres of population.”

*Sir Arthur Hobhouse, Chair of the Committee on National Parks, 1947*

**National Parks in Scotland**

National Parks came to Scotland in 2002 with the designation of the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park, followed in 2003 by the Cairngorms National Park. The aims of the Scottish national parks are to:

- conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
- promote sustainable use of natural resources of the area
- promote understanding and enjoyment (including recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public
- promote sustainable economic and social development of the area’s communities

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28
Cairngorms National Park
This is what makes the Cairngorms special:

- it covers 4,500 sq kms – 6% of Scotland
- it has around 17,000 residents
- 1.5 million people visit each year
- it has the most extensive area of Caledonian Forest in Britain
- it has the most extensive area of arctic-alpine habitat in Britain
- it’s home to 25% of the UK’s rare and threatened species
- four of Scotland’s five highest mountains are within the national park

‘This place, the Cairngorms National Park, is unlike anywhere else. It’s a place of huge mountains that seem to loom over your shoulder; of vast forests sheltering communities that have grown in partnership with the trees. A place of clean rivers and lochs, of moorland stretching for miles.

It’s a refuge for animals and plants, and a place of inspiration; somewhere people can come looking for a sense of wildness, of space, of living in closer contact with the realities of stone, water and wood.’

Excerpt from Cairngorms National Park Interpretation Guidance Document

Further information:
www.cairngorms.co.uk
www.visitcairngorms.com

Photo of old pine Glenmore Forest by Geoff Simpson
Photo of Crested Tit and Pine Marten by Neil McIntyre
Lake District National Park
This is what makes the Lake District special:

- it has 87 of England's highest 100 mountains
- it covers 2,292km² - approximately 1% of Great Britain's land area
- 42,239 people live within the National Park; almost all the 495,000 residents of Cumbria live within 15 miles
- it's home to 14 main lakes and many smaller ones including England's deepest (Wastwater, 73 metres) and longest (Windermere, 10.5 miles). Only one uses the word lake in its name - Bassenthwaite Lake. All the rest are known as meres or waters!
- the ancient semi-natural woodlands add texture, colour and variety to the landscape and provide a home for native animals and plants. The high rainfall in the core of the National Park favours woodlands rich in Atlantic mosses and liverworts, ferns and lichen.
- many Lake District names come from Norse settlers in the 10th century: beck (stream), dale (valley), gill (gorge), tarn (lake) and thwaite (clearing).
- it's rich in wildlife - osprey, golden eagle and red squirrel can be found here, as well as insect-eating plants.

‘...a sort of national property in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy.’

In 1810, the English poet William Wordsworth describing the Lake District

Further information: www.lakedistrict.gov.uk

Photo of canoeing LDNPA, photo of daffodils Helen Reynolds, photo of Striding Edge Dominic Donnini
Outdoor Learning & the John Muir Award

It’s widely recognized that learning doesn’t have to take place just within educational buildings. The outdoors has huge potential for learning. Learning outdoors can be fun, adventurous, exhilarating, challenging and creative. It can offer formative experiences that inspire confidence, awareness and appreciation, values and responsibility.

It can take place in a broad spectrum of settings and timeframes, from spontaneous school grounds activities to expeditions in National Parks, from field study trips to residential at outdoor centres.

‘Learning in the outdoors can make significant contributions to literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. In literacy there are opportunities to use different texts: the spoken word, charts, maps, timetables and instructions. In numeracy there are opportunities for learners to measure angles and calculate bearings and journey times. In health and wellbeing there are opportunities to become physically active in alternative ways and to improve emotional wellbeing and mental health…Outdoor learning offers many opportunities for learners to deepen and contextualize their understanding within curriculum areas, and for linking learning across the curriculum.’

Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning, Learning & Teaching Scotland guidance 2010

The John Muir Award supports providers of outdoor adventure and learning to deliver programmes that fully integrate environmental awareness and responsibility. It encourages their staff to see themselves as champions of the natural environment as a fundamental aspect of delivering adventurous activity. This involves acknowledging and promoting appropriate values, ethics, motivations, behaviours and skills.

‘The John Muir Award provides structure and resources for an environmental agenda which dovetails with Outward Bound philosophy and enhances courses. Clients like it. It’s good for staff development, which has a knock on benefit on the quality of instruction on other courses.’

Outward Bound Course Director

‘Outdoor education is an experiential method of learning with the use of all senses. It takes place primarily, but not exclusively, through exposure to the natural environment. In outdoor education, the emphasis for the subject of learning is placed on relationships concerning people and natural resources.

This definition implies that outdoor education is more than just learning about nature. Historically, two branches of outdoor education have been identified: environmental education and adventure education. Truly functional outdoor education [outdoor learning] incorporates aspects of both approaches.’

Simon Priest
Health is ‘a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.’
World Health Organization, 1948

Health and the natural environment
Growing medical evidence shows that access to the natural environment improves health and wellbeing, prevents disease and helps people recover from illness. Experiencing nature in the outdoors can help tackle obesity, coronary heart disease and mental health problems.

How the natural environment benefits health
The natural environment offers many benefits for health and wellbeing:

• It reduces stress levels
• It encourages people to be more active, which is very good for health
• It helps people avoid getting ill
• It helps people keep stable once they have got an illness
• People live longer if they live near areas of green space

Programmes providing regular health walks, which create strong links with the natural environment, could be greatly expanded. The UK has one of the highest death rates from heart disease in Europe, with 115,000 dying prematurely each year. People using the natural environment keep active longer and adults who become more active halve their risk of dying early from heart disease.
Source: Natural England

‘Children increase their physical activity levels when outdoors and are attracted to nature.’
Dr William Bird, 2007

Health and Wellbeing – what is it?
It encompasses:

• Physical activity
• Mental and emotional wellbeing - understanding our own feelings; care and respect for self and others; positive relationships
• Social wellbeing - exploring rights and responsibilities; bringing about positive change in local community/society
• Physical wellbeing - assessing and managing risk; keeping self and others safe
• Planning for choices and changes - sharing experiences, recognising skills and abilities.
• Movement skills, competencies and concepts - developing skills and techniques, encountering new challenges
• Cooperation and competition - developing skills to lead and take responsibility
• Evaluating and appreciation - recognising strengths of group members, observing and reflecting
• Food and health - awareness of food choices including availability, sustainability, journey, season; hygiene & safety

The John Muir Award encourages active participation in outdoor activities. This can incorporate planning and risk assessment and management, working as part of a group, and facing new challenges. Contributory activities can be physical and energetic, or sedentary, relaxing and reflective. Personal responsibility and sharing experiences are fundamental to achieving an Award.

‘Fresh air comes into your body and all the bad stuff goes out, the stuff that makes people not well like anger and stressed out.’
John Muir Award Participant, Drumchapel

The Health Impacts of the John Muir Award
Research by Glasgow University Public Health and Health Policy Unit, funded by Glasgow Centre for Population Health

Visiting wild places
• Nearly 1 in 10 who took part had never visited a wild place before doing their John Muir Award.
• Those living in the poorest circumstances were over 6 times more likely to have had no experience of wild places.

Enjoying the John Muir Award
• The vast majority who took part (95%) enjoyed their John Muir Award experience and felt they had achieved something by doing it (92%).

Hopes for the Future
• Most people (72%) who took part said that doing their John Muir Award made them want to spend more time outdoors, and to visit natural environments more, especially those who live in less well off places.

‘The implications are clear: more young people should have the chance to have this kind of experience, and efforts should continue to reach the least advantaged.’
Health Impacts study research team.
Biodiversity & the John Muir Award

What is it?

**Biodiversity – it’s the variety of life**
It’s everything that makes up life on earth. It includes habitats – where things live – and species – the range of living things, including us.

‘Biodiversity embraces all living things, from the tiniest garden ant to the Caledonian granny pine. Biodiversity is everywhere, in window box and wildwood, in roadside and rainforest, in snowfield and seaside and sky.’
Magnus Magnusson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why is biodiversity important?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We’re all part of this truly amazing diversity of life. More importantly, we need it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Biodiversity maintains the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Biodiversity supplies us with our raw materials e.g. fossil fuels, timber, soil and DNA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Biodiversity enhances our quality of life. Experiencing the natural world brings us pleasure and improves our understanding of our local area and our planet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• History, tradition and culture are all influenced by landscape and biodiversity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Biodiversity provides us with the means of developing future benefits e.g. advances in medicine and agriculture.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Protecting wildlife and wild places for their own sake is vital, but also to sustain our own future well-being. A healthy environment in which to live and play is dependent on biodiversity.

Whilst many people aren’t aware of the term ‘Biodiversity’, 99% of people agree that protecting the variety of wildlife and plant life is important for future generations. (SNH Commissioned Report 110: Promoting key messages about natural heritage).

The whole of the UK is covered by Local Biodiversity Action Plans. Find your own by visiting [www.jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5705](http://www.jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5705). Each region has its own Biodiversity Officer, who will be a source of information, ideas and resources.
Government responsibilities

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 clearly identifies that ‘It is the duty of every public body and office-holder, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions’.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) for England, Wales places a duty on Government Departments and the National Assembly for Wales to have regard for the conservation of biodiversity and maintain lists of species and habitats for which conservation steps should be taken or promoted, in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

What can you do?

‘Public indifference is the biggest threat to our biodiversity’
Deputy Scottish Environment Minister

Use the John Muir Award to set a context for engaging with biodiversity. You can find out about it (Explore), do something to maintain, enhance, or record biodiversity (Conserve), and let others know of what you’ve learned and done for biodiversity (Share).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7 threats to biodiversity</th>
<th>What you and your group can do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Lack of information</td>
<td>Take part in surveys, collect data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Lack of awareness. If people don’t know what it is and why it’s important, it won’t be well protected</td>
<td>Share what you do for biodiversity with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Appropriate Policy &amp; Resources from government</td>
<td>Raising awareness, collecting data, will put it on the agenda of policymakers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Loss of habitats - suitable places for things to live &amp; grow</td>
<td>Create &amp; maintain wildlife gardens, hedgerows, ‘wildlife corridors’ – particularly in urban areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Unsuitable land management</td>
<td>Work with landowners to understand biodiversity issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Climate change and pollution</td>
<td>Look at how you &amp; your organisation use resources &amp; energy. Do an audit. Plan an ‘energy minimisation day’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Non-native species can take over an area and push out local species</td>
<td>Remove them to help other plants to flourish.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Create your own Biodiversity Action Plan – for your garden, school or centre grounds, or local wild place.

Find a range of Biodiversity links in the John Muir Award Biodiversity Resource Guide.
Outdoor Access & the John Muir Award

What has Outdoor Access got to do with the John Muir Award?
The John Muir Award encourages you to enjoy the outdoors, responsibly. This is exactly what Outdoor Access laws and codes explain and promote. You can Explore an area in terms of outdoor access issues. Who are the different users of an area? What do they use it for, and how do they work together? Take responsibility (Conserve) by understanding these issues and your rights and responsibilities, and acting accordingly. Share your knowledge and understanding to help others be responsible. This will increase your enjoyment, too.

All of the land in the countryside is owned by someone. Even land that appears to be ‘unused’ belongs to someone, and may have several important purposes, for example for grazing sheep, for gathering drinking water, or as a habitat for wildlife. This doesn’t mean that you must keep to surfaced roads, or that you can only enjoy the countryside from the windows of a car. Many areas of land are open to you as of right or by tradition.

Access rights cover many activities, including for example:

- informal activities, such as picnicking, photography and sightseeing
- active pursuits, including walking, cycling, riding, canoeing and wild camping
- taking part in recreational and educational events
- simply going from one place to another.

This doesn’t mean that you can just go anywhere you please, though. There are places that you don’t have access rights to, such as buildings and their immediate surroundings, or houses and their gardens, or most land in which crops are growing.

The law is different in Scotland to England and Wales. It’s worth being informed so that you can make good decisions and judgements. Your access rights come with responsibilities, though the main thing is to use common sense.
Scotland

Know the Code before you go...

Enjoy Scotland’s outdoors - responsibly!

Everyone has the right to be on most land and inland water providing they act responsibly. Your access rights and responsibilities are explained fully in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Whether you’re in the outdoors or managing the outdoors, the key things are to:

• take responsibility for your own actions
• respect the interests of other people
• care for the environment

Find out more by visiting www.outdooraccess-scotland.com or phoning your local Scottish Natural Heritage office.

England and Wales

You’ll find details of the Countryside Code, education resources, and translations into Welsh at www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk.

For more information about the countryside in Wales visit www.ccw.gov.uk.

• Be safe – plan ahead and follow any signs
• Leave gates and property as you find them
• Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
• Keep your dog under close control
• Consider other people
What does all this mean?
The Scottish Outdoor Access Code offers some useful practical guidance. When you’re in the outdoors, you need to:

**Care for the environment**
Our environment contributes to your quality of life and your health. It’s important that you:

- follow any reasonable advice and information
- take your litter home
- treat places with care, leaving them as you find them
- don’t recklessly disturb or intentionally damage wildlife or historic places
- keep your dog under proper control

**Respect people’s privacy and peace of mind.**
Privacy is important for everyone. Avoid causing alarm to people, especially at night, by keeping a reasonable distance from houses and private gardens, or by using paths or tracks.

**Take responsibility for your own actions**
The outdoors is a great place to enjoy but it’s also a place where people work and live, and has many natural hazards. Make sure you’re aware of these and act safely. Follow any reasonable advice and respect the needs of other people enjoying or working in the outdoors.

Help farmers, landowners and others to work safely and effectively. Keep a safe distance from any work and watch for signs that tell you dangerous activities are being carried out, such as tree felling or crop spraying. You can also help by:

- leaving gates as you find them
- not blocking or obstructing an entrance or track
- looking for alternative routes before entering a field with animals
- not feeding animals
- using local advice so that you can take account of shooting and stalking
- not damaging fences or walls
- avoiding damage to crops by using paths and tracks


About John Muir

Participants should have an awareness of who John Muir was and his relevance today. A Resource Guide on Muir is available from the Resources page of the Award website.

John Muir (1838–1914) is considered to be the founder of the modern world conservation movement.

He urged everyone to ‘do something for wildness and make the mountains glad.’

Born in the fishing port of Dunbar, in East Lothian, Scotland, he developed an early awareness of the value of wild nature. At the age of eleven, he emigrated with his family to the wilds of Wisconsin in the American midwest, where he spent his teenage years. Arriving in California at the age of 30, he achieved fame as a botanist, geologist and glaciologist, and pioneered what is now known as ecology. During his explorations of the High Sierra and Alaska (1870 – 1890), Muir became aware of the threats to such wild places, and was the first to clearly call for their conservation. He led the campaign for the protection of Yosemite, and deeply influenced Presidents Roosevelt and Wilson in designating over 50 areas and 200 national monuments. In order to campaign for wild places, Muir helped set up the Sierra Club which today is one of the leading environmental campaigning organisations in the world.

If Muir himself seems a distant figure to some, his message – that we need to experience, enjoy and care for wild places – is relevant to all our lives in the 21st century. It’s this message that is at the heart of the John Muir Award.

Books by John Muir

John Muir, the Wilderness Journeys includes five of Muir’s best known books: The Story of My Boyhood and Youth, The Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf, First Summer in the Sierra, Travels in Alaska and Stickeen.

Surf the web

www.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit
A superb John Muir Exhibit maintained by the Sierra Club – over 300 pages of text, pictures, music, bibliographies and education packs.

www.jmbt.org.uk
Website of John Muir Birthplace Trust, featuring information and resources.
The John Muir Trust

Our Vision

‘Wild land is protected throughout the UK, and wild places are valued by all.’

Since 1983 the John Muir Trust has dedicated itself to making John Muir’s message a reality within the United Kingdom. By acquiring and sensitively managing key areas of wild land, the Trust sets out to show that the damage inflicted on such places over the centuries can be repaired. By working with local communities, the Trust aims to conserve land on a sustainable basis for the human, animal and plant communities which share it; and that the great spiritual qualities of wildness, of tranquillity and solitude can be preserved as a legacy for those to come.

The Trust owns and manages nine areas in Scotland. These are Ben Nevis, Li and Coire Dhorrcaill in Knoydart, Torrin, Strathaird and Sconser (all on the Isle of Skye), Sandwood in Sutherland, Quinag in Assynt, Glen Lude in the Borders, and Schiehallion. The Trust takes a holistic view in its approach to land management, recognising the important relationships between all the many aspects which make up our wild places. The Trust is interested in the beauty of wild places, their nature conservation, and in the people living and visiting there. It has developed a distinctive style of management involving local residents, with devolved management committees making decisions for each estate.

The John Muir Trust also works with local community and conservation partnerships. These include the Knoydart Foundation, the North Harris Trust, the Assynt Foundation, the John Muir Birthplace Trust, the Borders Forest Trust and the Sierra Club in the USA.

The John Muir Award plays a key part in the Trust’s aspiration to raise awareness of the value of wild places, and encourage people to take responsibility for them.

The John Muir Trust is a charity managed by a Board of Trustees, elected by its membership, bringing together expertise and a range of skills relevant to wild land management and education.

Support the John Muir Trust by becoming a member – as an individual, or through the Group Membership category.

For details on membership, contact the main John Muir Trust office, or membership@jmt.org.
Background of the John Muir Award

In 1995 the John Muir Trust carried out a study of the involvement of young people in environmental organisations in Scotland. This revealed that fewer than 1,500 young Scots aged 12-24 were members – less than 0.1% of that age group. The study highlighted a failure to actively involve young people in issues such as the quality of their own local environment, or the welfare of the UK’s wildlife and wild landscapes.

The study also looked at the policies, projects and environmental awards within youth clubs, the Scouts, Girl Guides, Boys Brigade, Duke of Edinburgh’s Award and other voluntary youth organisations in Scotland. In sharp contrast to environmental bodies, Scottish youth groups were successfully engaging over 500,000 young people every week in their activities. For most youth organisations, however, an environmental perspective was either missing, or was a low priority. Crucially, most leaders and volunteers said that they lacked the knowledge, skills, experience or confidence to develop or lead an environmental dimension with young people. Despite this, the study identified an enthusiasm to develop such activities.

The aim of the John Muir Award, therefore, was to provide a scheme that integrated the existing work of the voluntary youthwork sector and engaged their members in environmental awareness and activity.

When it was launched at Dunbar in February 1997, it was designed to be:

- Youth centred, though available to adults and families, too
- Open and welcoming to all
- Delivered within a personal development context
- Based on fun and adventure
- Holistic – integrating awareness, understanding and care for wild places
- Creative, encouraging use of the arts in exploring and understanding the natural environment
- Delivered in partnership with large, established, well-resourced networks, in a way that enhances their own provision and activity
- Adaptable to the particular needs of any young person, environmental body or youth group, and accessible to individuals of all ages, families and independent groups
- Supportive to youth leaders, teachers, volunteers and policy-makers, by providing resources, training and advice
- Encouraging to young people who have been excluded from opportunities to experience wild places.
- An opportunity to explore values and spirituality
In subsequent years there has been increased integration of an environmental agenda in both formal and informal education, and an increase in the number and range of initiatives that promote environmental awareness and responsibility. The John Muir Award continues to be an active part of this momentum.

In November 2000, the first John Muir Trust Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to the environmentalist, mountaineer and broadcaster Tom Weir, in recognition of his many years of campaigning on behalf of Scotland’s wild places. The second was achieved by the celebrated Scottish ecologist Adam Watson in 2004, and in 2005 Doug Scott – the first Briton to summit Everest, and a champion of wild places and mountain communities – was the first recipient outwith Scotland. Hill walker, conservationist and writer Irvine Butterfield was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007.

For further background you’ll find a range of publications on the Resources page of the Award website.
Forms
The John Muir Award will provide:

- Support, guidance and advice on the delivery of the Award
- Promotional material and resources as appropriate
- Certificates to all individuals who successfully complete each level of the Award by meeting its stated Criteria
- A Certificate to recognise Award Provider status
- Opportunities to access John Muir Award Training programmes and conferences

Sample School/Outdoor Centre will:

- Promote the ethos of the John Muir Award
- Ensure that the experiences of those participating fulfil the Criteria of the John Muir Award
- In conjunction with the John Muir Award, provide suitable guidance and training opportunities for staff/volunteers
- Ensure that adequate Health and Safety measures are in place, and be covered by appropriate public liability and personal accident insurance
- Use John Muir Award documentation to ensure effective registration and confirmation, and maintain an accurate record of activities of those participating
- Share good practice with other organisations

This Agreement is valid until ............................................................

The Agreement can be renewed for a further three year period following a review of the above points.

Award Provider Key Contact ...........................................................

John Muir Award Contact ............................................................

Date .............................................................................................
John Muir Award Proposal Form

Outline your activity and describe how you will meet the four John Muir Award Challenges

This Proposal Form is an aid to your planning and delivery of a John Muir Award, at Discovery, Explorer or Conserver Level. It enables Award staff to offer support and advice, and help ensure that your Proposal will lead to successful completion of Awards.

Please note that responsibility for ensuring adequate health & safety, legal and insurance arrangements lies with the group/organisation (or individual/ family) that is setting up activity towards achieving John Muir Awards.

To register, forward a copy of your Proposal Form to the Award office at least 2 weeks before starting. Please refer to www.johnmuiraward.org for Award Criteria, Information Handbook and further guidance.

Contact Person: ___________________________ Date: ____________

Group/Organisation: ________________________________
(or ‘Self-Guided’)

Address: _______________________________________

Postcode: ________

Phone: ______________ e-mail: ______________

Mobile: ______________ Web: ______________

Any organisations or partners helping towards this Award?

____________________________

Summary of Award Proposal: For Award level: __________

Outline the main aims and themes of what you plan to do:

Group background:

Include details such as: who you are, age ranges, group size, any referral process...

Start date: ___________ Finish date: ___________

Estimated time commitment:

E.g. hours spent per week, residential length...

Is any evaluation taking place for this activity/work/project?

____________________________

How many people are involved: ______ participants ______ leaders/staff

Number of Record Books needed: ______ (1 per participant/ leader - optional resource, on request)

Return a copy of this Proposal Form to your Regional Manager in the first instance, or to:
e-mail: info@johnmuiraward.org tel: 0131 554 0114
or John Muir Award, 41 Commercial Street, EDINBURGH EH6 6JD
<table>
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<th>The 4 Award Challenges:</th>
<th>What are you going to do and how?</th>
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| **Discover a Wild Place**  
Identify a wild place (or places) on which to focus your activity. This can be a garden, school grounds, a park or beach, local woodland, a mountain range or river, or any other place with natural character. Experience it, enjoy it, become comfortable in it, see it in different seasons, times of day, weather conditions, in company or on your own… | |
| **Explore it**  
Explore and travel extensively, by walking, camping, canoeing… or just sitting, looking and listening, in order to understand and appreciate more about it. What makes it wild? Is it a special place - why? How do wild things (plants, animals, insects, birds, people) depend on each other? Use all your senses. Make a map, do a wildlife survey, identify plants, animals, birds. Take photographs, videos or sound diaries. Paint or draw plants, animals and landscapes. Keep a nature diary. | |
| **Do something to Conserve it**  
Take some personal responsibility for conserving and protecting a wild place through practical action. This could involve enhancing biodiversity, campaigning or fundraising; wildlife or pollution surveys, litter cleanups; planting trees, shrubs or wildflowers, creating wildlife habitats or clearing invasive plants. | |
| **Share your Experiences**  
Tell people about your own experiences; share your knowledge, thoughts and feelings. Make an exhibition of photos, paintings, drawings, or words. Organise a presentation with slides, film or photos. Lead a guided walk around the place where you’ve been completing your Award. Review and discuss your experience of nature with others. | |
When we contemplate the whole globe as one great dewdrop, striped and dotted with islands and continents, flying through space with all the other stars, all singing and shining together as one, the whole Universe appears as an infinite storm of beauty.

This grand show is eternal. It is always sunrise somewhere. The dew is never dried all at once. A shower is forever falling; Vapour forever rising. Eternal sunrise, Eternal sunset, Eternal dawn and gloaming, on sea and continents and islands, each in its turn as the round Earth rolls.

John Muir
The John Muir Trust is the leading wild land conservation charity in the UK. We love wild places and are dedicated to protecting and improving them for people and wildlife. Over 10,000 members support us in our work. If you care about the natural world, please join us. [www.johnmuirtrust.org](http://www.johnmuirtrust.org).

### For Information about the John Muir Trust contact:

**Scotland**  
John Muir Award  
41 Commercial Street  
Edinburgh EH6 6JD  
**Tel:** 0131 554 0114  

**England and Wales**  
John Muir Award  
Trevelyan House  
Dimple Road  
Matlock  
Derbyshire DE4 3YH  
**Tel:** 01629 584 457  

**Email:** info@johnmuiraward.org  
**Web:** [www.johnmuiraward.org](http://www.johnmuiraward.org)

Regional contact:

The John Muir Trust is a Scottish charitable company limited by guarantee  
(Charity No SC002061 Company No SC081620). Registered office: Tower House, Station Road, Pitlochry PH16 5AN