



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 **Conservator 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:

This project is a joint venture between Sussex Downs College, South Downs National Park and Action in Rural Sussex. The project's theme is to use the 'wild' place, South Downs National Park, as inspiration to develop the outdoor classroom at Sussex Downs College. We want to make a little part of the National Park available for all to experience in the college and local community regardless of age or ability. The outdoor classroom will be a place for visitors to gain awareness of environmental issues.

Whilst increasing accessibility to 'wild' places, participants will be gaining valuable new skills (such as hedge-laying and tool handling), and increased knowledge (in areas such as sustainability and biodiversity).

Group background:

The group is part of the 'I-Project Outdoor Construction' course for 16 – 19 year olds, run by Sussex Downs College. The course works with participants over sixteen weeks and gives new skills and experience whilst they plan their next move, whether it's further education or employment. The group size is around 10, with one Tutor and one Support Assistant.

Start date:

Finish date:

Estimated time commitment:

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

How many people are involved: participants leaders/staff

No. 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: info@johnmuiraward.org, or John Muir Award, 41 Commercial Street, EDINBURGH EH6 6JD, Tel: 0300 321 4962

Discover a Wild Place

The activities will be focussed on two 'wild places' – the local South Downs National Park countryside and the outdoor classroom with multi-sensory garden which is being developed in the grounds of the Sussex Downs College Lewes Campus.

The outdoor classroom is a sustainable area for wildlife and people, open to all at SDC, local schools, conservation groups and members of the wider community. The area will be used to educate and raise awareness of - sustainability, biodiversity within the local environment, and carbon footprint reduction. It is hoped the outdoor classroom will be used by a large number of visitors who do not have access to the wilder parts of the downs - bringing a little of SDNP to staff, learners and visitors regardless of age or ability.

Explore it

The group will explore the wild areas through 'hands on' practical learning experiences. Over a number of days they will understand and appreciate the downs by spending a prolonged period there. They will also discover the benefits, techniques and skills involved in hedge-laying and coppicing, two crafts which promote conservation, biodiversity and the health of wild places.

Whilst walking they will be advised about the changing environment and shown the special qualities of the downs, this will promote an awareness of the value of wild nature. Students will be encouraged to document their journey and time on the downs by taking photographs.

The students will be told the differences between manmade and natural hedges; how natural hedges effect and greatly improve the biodiversity of an area; and which trees make up some different hedges. Most importantly they will learn skills in hedge-laying. The time spent in the National Park will give the students the confidence to work as a team with the goal of laying a section of hedge on the downs.

The students will be given a coppicing workshop. The benefits of this craft will be explained to the students and they will be shown examples of coppiced trees from different years. This will instil an understanding of the source of materials used when hedge-laying.

The students will be given a hedge maintenance workshop. They will be advised about why it's important to the countryside to maintain well kept hedges.

Do something to
Conserve it

Inspired by the South Downs National Park and the time spent there, the group will take a little bit of the tradition and natural environment of SDNP back to the college and create a lasting, worthwhile record of the skills they have learnt. The area created by the group will increase the biodiversity of the college garden and create a 'wildlife corridor' through a semi urban area.

The garden will provide a vital opportunity to discover more about the National Park, sustainability, biodiversity and the outdoor environment, for those who can not easily access these areas first hand.

Share your
Experiences

The group will be creating an area which will last for prosperity, as well as being a symbol for years to come of the hard work and commitment the group has shown. One of the key points of the outdoor classroom is that it's accessible by anyone interested in visiting. It will be open to staff and students, but also outside conservation groups and members of the wider community, regardless of age or ability, sharing awareness and biodiversity with all.

A notice board explaining their work and experience will be created for the garden; it will explain to the many visitors the skills learned by the group.

Throughout the project the group will be encouraged to record the progress of their work through photography. When completed, these photographs will be collated into a photostream - telling the story and development of the project. The photostream will be accessible through the college website for all to share in the achievements of the group.