

Report on 2011 Conservation Work Parties Programme

Supported by a financial grant from the Linley Wightman Shaw Foundation



Path work at Sandwood

Members and non members join our conservation work parties. These events take place on John Muir Trust properties and on our partnership properties. Participants arrange their own food, travel and accommodation. These events are designed to enable our members and others to:

- Contribute to the practical work of the John Muir Trust on Trust and partnership properties;
- Learn about the John Muir Trust and partnership properties and how they are managed;
- Practice some of the skills of conservation management;
- Meet other members and John Muir Trust staff;
- Experience and have contact with wild places.

"Do something for wildness and make the mountains glad"
(John Muir, 1892)

Volunteers donated over seven hundred days during the main twenty four work parties run in 2011. We ran twenty work parties on our own properties, four working on properties owned by our partners (Corrour Estate, North Harris Trust, Galson Estate Trust and the Knoydart Foundation). For the third time in five years volunteers from the John Muir Trust visited Skálanes Nature Reserve in East Iceland to help out there for a week.

In addition volunteers were heavily involved in vegetation and other species monitoring on all our properties and helped out with work parties organised by John Muir Trust local members groups. At our latest property in the Scottish Borders, Glenlude, volunteers have spent over forty days there on various tasks during the last quarter of 2011 in addition to the first general work party which attracted over twenty volunteers for a weekend in October. This is an early demonstration of the heavy involvement of volunteers planned for this properties management.

Work parties varied from lasting one day up to four of them running for a week with around a hundred and fifty different volunteers taking part during the year. Most were John Muir Trust members and had come from all over the UK to help. The response to the general work party programme in 2011 was up on previous years:-

- 24 work parties (compared to 21 in 2010, 22 in 2009 and 19 in 2008)
- 153 volunteers involved (compared to 135 in 2010, 128 in 2009 & 110 in 2008)

Local members groups were also very active in 2011 with the North East Scotland group organising monthly work parties at Glen Taner, the Glasgow and West Group returning to the Island of Giga for a work party in July, in August the Yorkshire members group celebrated the tenth anniversary of conservation activities in the Yorkshire Dales and a new Scottish Borders members group was established who have been regularly helping out at Glenlude.

We also had the assistance of several of the corporate supporters of the John Muir Trust with staff from Berghaus visiting Skye in July and staff from Wilderness Scotland going to East Schiehallion in September.

As always many thanks to those that came along and helped out during 2010. Below is a rough total of what the work achieved (as well as being highly enjoyable!)

- Rubbish collected (bin bags or equivalent) - Inland lochs 4 (Corrour) Summits 20 (Ben Nevis in 3 visits) Beaches 650 (Camasunary, Lagh Mhor, Bagh Theilinis, Huishinis, Glen Scaladal, Sandwood Bay, Polin, Oldshoremore, Sheigra)
- Invasive species control - Rhododendron (Sconser & Inverie), Gunnera & Piripiri (N Harris), Himalayan Balsam (Glenlude)
- Path repairs & maintenance - Over 20km of paths were maintained and repaired (sometimes several times, 5 times on Schiehallion & twice at Sandwood and Li & Coire Dhorrcail) involving drain & ditch clearing, new surfacing, landscaping and creation of new water bars & culverts. Paths worked on included Camasunary, Blaven, Keppoch, Coire Dhorrcail, Sandwood, Quinag, Schiehallion, Skàlanes, Road to Isles (Corrour)
- Fences and cairns - 2000 metres of deer fence removed (East Schiehallion and Li & Coire Dhorrcail), 0.5km stock fence removed (Glenlude) deer enclosures built (x2 at Quinag), Several cairns removed on Ben Nevis and a new interpretation panel cairn built at the Butt of Lewis, dry stone walling (around 20metres of gaps repaired)
- Woodland work - protection work on young saplings at Glenlude (tree guards and brash fence), non native self seeded trees removed (Strathaird around 3,000 Corrour 600), 1500 trees planted at Skàlanes

You can see pictures and reports on each of the work parties by following the links on the table below. 2011 marked a milestone for the management of work parties that have been carried out within the John Muir Trust since purchase of its first property in 1987. After years of being run by volunteers on an honorarium or contracted out on an annual basis a 1.5 day per week post co-ordinating the work parties was created on permanent staff as part of a package where Sandy Maxwell took over the conservation management of the East Schiehallion and Glenlude properties.

We would like to thank the **Linley Wightman Shaw Foundation** for their generous support to the 2011 programme of work parties.

Dates of work	Location	Proposed activity	Notes / reports
27th March	E Schiehallion	path maintenance	see report
5th to 10th April	Inverie (Knoydart)	rhododendron control, beach cleaning and wood carving	see report
15th to 18th April	Li & Coire Dhorrcail (Knoydart)	fence removal, path works and beach cleaning	see report
21st to 23rd April	Sandwood	path landscaping, marram grass transplanting and beach cleaning	see report
24th April	Quinag	path maintenance	see report
29th April to 2nd May	E Schiehallion	path works and fence maintenance	see report
6th to 9th May	Strathaird (Skye)	woodland, beach cleaning and general tasks	see report
27th to 30th May	Li & Coire Dhorrcail (Knoydart)	fence removal, path works and beach cleaning	see report
6th to 11th June	North Harris	beach cleaning, path maintenance and general tasks	see report
20th to 25th June	Corrour	woodland, beach cleaning and path work	see report
26th June	Ben Nevis	summit litter clean, path maintenance and cairn removal	see report
2nd July	E Schiehallion	path maintenance	see report
8th to 11th July	Quinag	high level path works (weather permitting)	see report
15th to 18th July	Glen Nevis	fence removal, path works and water vole survey (weather permitting)	see report
25th to 30th July	North Harris & Galson (Lewis)	gunnera eradication, beach cleaning and general tasks	see report
5th to 8th August	Strathaird (Skye)	woodland, beach cleaning and general tasks	see report
11th to 13th August	Sandwood	pathwork, beach cleaning and general tasks	see report
20th August	E Schiehallion	path maintenance	see report
28th August	Ben Nevis	summit litter collection, path maintenance and removal of fresh cairns	see report
9th to 12th September	Strathaird (Skye)	woodland, beach cleaning and general tasks	see report

24th September	Ben Nevis	summit litter clean, path maintenance and cairn removal	see report
2nd October	E Schiehallion	path and fence maintenance	see report
22nd & 23rd October	Glenlude	Drystone dyking, fence removal & building, woodland work	see report

A group of volunteers went again to Skalanes in East Iceland for a week at the end of August. You can read a report about their trip and some photos [here](#). You can see a report of previous trips [here](#)