



## Report on 2015

### Conservation Work Party volunteering in the John Muir Trust

Members and non-members can join our conservation work parties. They 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)

#### Overview

In 2015 there were 25 organised work parties (another two were cancelled before running due to low numbers), plus a wide range of volunteering by individuals and groups such as the John Muir Trust local members groups. These were carried out mostly on Trust properties, but visits were also made to partners and like-minded properties.



Collecting rubbish on Ben Nevis



Helping on the CALL tree nursery



Path work in Glen Nevis

The number of work days achieved in the main programme was slightly up on 2014.

In 2015 there was 679 days volunteering being donated by 122 different people in the main programme. That figure excludes the volunteering done by John Muir Award participants on Trust properties, and by Trust volunteers with their local groups away from Trust properties. It also doesn't include the ad hoc volunteering carried out at Glenlude. On average each work party had around 11 people on it, but due to the informal way that they are run (people look after their own travel and accommodation) people do drop in and out, usually to fit in hill walks or bags!

## What was achieved?

- Pathwork

- Over 17,500 metres of path were maintained with popular paths (such as Ben Nevis, East Schiehallion & Sandwood) often receiving more than one visit
- Repairs were carried out to over 200 metres of path including resurfacing, building cross drains, anchor bars, pitching and improving drainage



Weeding seedlings in the CALL tree nursery

Paths worked on include East Schiehallion, Sandwood, Nevis (Steall gorge, upper Ben & Steall meadow paths) Quinag, Little Assynt(all ability), Culag Woodland, Suilven approach track, Gleann Lacasdail (Harris) and on Tanera Mor.

- Rubbish

- Beaches cleaned included 4 cleaned twice at Sandwood (Sandwood Bay, Polin, Dromin & Oldshoremore) Inverie, Huishinis & Skeaudale on Harris, Mol Mor on Tanera Mor In total around 40 ton bags of rubbish were collected and removed from beaches during the year
- Mountain top rubbish is a reducing problem on Nevis helped by an increased number of other groups helping out during the year but around 12 bags of rubbish were removed by work parties in the year
- Used tree tubes at Glenlude were collected up and sent for recycling



Drystone dyking in West Harris

- Invasives

- Rhododendrons were removed on Knoydart
- Gunnera was removed on Harris
- Gorse was controlled at Glencanisp in preparation for native woodland planting

- Woodland

- Treeplanting, around 2,500 trees were planted mostly on Li & Coire Dhorrcail but also at Glenlude
- Seed collection was carried out at Glenlude
- Brushing/thinning was carried out on over 4 Ha of ground at Glenlude and in Culag woodland
- Brash Hedges covering almost 1Ha were created at Glenlude
- Over 6,500 trees were weeded around (mostly of bracken) at Li & Coire Dhorrcail and Glenlude (and some at Ennerdale).



New stone pitching constructed on Schiehallion path

- A tree nursery for local scots pine was built in Coire Dhorrcail
- Fencing; almost 2 kilometres of electric deer fencing was erected at Glen Trolmaraig on North Harris as part of their deer management to increase native woodland regeneration. Deer fences were also checked and maintained at Li & Coire Dhorrcail , Culag Woodland and Little Assynt
- Monitoring
  - Various species were monitored including mountain ringlet butterflies and water voles at Nevis, red squirrels and adders at Glenlude and deer at Dun Coilich
  - Vegetation monitoring was carried out at Glenlude
- Estate management
  - Drystone dyking, around 25metres of walling at Scarista More & Tanera Mor were rebuilt
  - The Long Beach campsite at Inverie had several fire pits and benches constructed
  - At Glenlude the tree nursery was improved with hardening off benches and seed trays built. The tool store was reroofed, boundary fences/walls repaired and maintenance carried out on all the buildings
  - One volunteer assisted the CALL project with the preparation of their HLF funding application.



Building a tree nursery on Li & Coire Dhorrcail



The deer fence takes shape on North Harris



## Roundup of activity on work party programme

### John Muir Trust properties

On **Li & Coire Dhorrcail** there has been a lot of work creating new native woodland above Poll a' Mhuineil part of the work that has contributed to the winning of the Woodland Trust Scotland "New Native Woods" award this year. Lester Standen supervised two planting work parties of volunteers in the spring as well two further work parties to brush the bracken around the new birch and hazel seedlings.

There were three visits to **East Schiehallion** , path maintenance was carried out on all of them and on two work parties the continuing deterioration of the lower sections of the path was checked by rebuilding one ten metre section with six new anchor bars /surfacing and a three metre section replaced with new pitching. Other work included spot turfing on the old path line, helping Dun Coilich with a deer count, taking down old fencing and repairing experimental brash hedges.

In the Scottish Borders **Glenlude** hosted five work parties as well as the programme of ad hoc work days and local member's group work parties. These ranged from single days through long weekends to a full week in August. The building of brush hedges moved up to an industrial scale with two of 0.5 and 0.4 Ha being completed in the year within small felled conifer blocks. The first was planted up in the spring and already the trees and recovering ground flora are doing very well. Karen Purvis has also been working with volunteers to extend the tree nursery with improved facilities and a push on seed collecting in the area. Volunteers also carried out all the general estate tasks of fence repair building maintenance and looking after the growing saplings all over the property



NE Members group take down redundant fencing

On **Skye** there has been a lot of work this year by the staff to restructure the farm going on so we gave the estates there a rest from work parties. Work parties on Skye will resume again in April of 2016

At **Nevis** numbers have picked up on previous years and three work parties collected rubbish off the summit as well as carrying out maintenance on the upper sections of the path. In July a group of volunteers staying in the Steall hut maintained the path through the gorge as well as rebuilding some sections of the meadow path which were being threatened by the river. The usual monitoring of water voles & mountain ringlet butterflies were carried out.

**Sandwood** and **Quinag** were both visited twice during the year. The ongoing tasks of path repair and beach cleaning were the main features of both Sandwood visits and the car park at Blairmore got some attention with the toilets repainted and one of the benches partially rebuilt. At Quinag there has been a fair amount of work on the paths by local contractors so volunteers only had a small amount of maintenance to carry out.



Building benching on Long Beach campsite

### Partnership properties

During two separate weeks in the Western Isles we were able to help push forward an exciting experiment in deer management by the **North Harris Trust**. Partially funded by a conservation grant from the John Muir Trust a 3km long electric deer fence in a double line only at normal stock fence height is using natural boundaries to enclose over 1,800 Ha of ground to the west of Tarbert. Within this area deer numbers will be controlled to allow natural regeneration of the remnants of native woodland. Volunteers constructed over 2km of the



Loading trees to plant at Li & Coire Dhorrcail

fence through glen Trolmaraig. Other activity included more gunnera control and beach cleaning as well as drystone walling with the West Harris Trust

We had three visits to partners within the **Coigagh Assynt Living Landscape project (CALL)** the first two were timed to coincide with visits to Quinag which falls within the project. Work included helping out at the CALL tree nursery, path work and gorse control on the Sulven track with the Assynt Foundation also path maintenance on the all ability track at Little Assynt and woodland work on the Culag woods. The third work party was held on the island of Tanera Mor in the Summer Isles where paths worked on, drystone walling and beaches were cleaned including a survey of the rubbish on Mol Mor as part of the Marine Conservation Society national Beachwatch programme

A single visit to the Inverie side of Knoydart saw us working with the **Knoydart Foundation** to improve the facilities at the Long Beach campsite and with the **Knoydart Forest Trust** to continue with the ongoing rhododendron control around the village.



Path maintenance on East Schiehallion

Although not a partner of the Trust the **Wild Ennerdale** project in the western Lake District has been both an inspiration and of assistance to our rewilding project at Glenlude. A small group of Trust volunteers spent a couple of days at Ennerdale being shown around the valley and then helping local volunteers and staff from other agencies in a range of tasks including woodland management and flood prevention to assist with the conservation of fresh water pearl mussels.



Repainted toilet and new woodwork at Sandwood car park

### Local Members Groups

The most active group again was the North East Scotland group who as well as monthly work parties at Glen Taner held two work parties on the NTS Marr Lodge estate, two on the Balmoral estate and three at Portlethen Moss. The Yorkshire Members group held one work party in the Yorkshire Dales.

### Corporate work party

Berghaus, who are gold corporate members of the John Muir Trust sent staff to Glenlude to help with tree planting in April.



Path work in Glen Nevis

## Photographs of activities in 2015



You can see photos of all of these work parties on the Flickr sites listed below

- **Western Isles**  
[www.flickr.com/groups/westernislesworkparties/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/westernislesworkparties/)
- **East Schiehallion**  
[www.flickr.com/groups/schiehallionworkparties/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/schiehallionworkparties/)
- **Glen Nevis & Ben Nevis**  
[www.flickr.com/groups/nevisworkparties/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/nevisworkparties/)
- **Glenlude** [www.flickr.com/groups/glenludeworkparties/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/glenludeworkparties/)
- **Sandwood, Quinag and our partners in the Coigach Assynt partnership (CALL)**  
[www.flickr.com/groups/sandwoodquinagcallworkparties/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/sandwoodquinagcallworkparties/)
- **Skye and Knoydart** (including the Knoydart Foundation and Li & Coire Dhorrcail)  
[www.flickr.com/groups/skyeknoydartworkparties/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/skyeknoydartworkparties/)
- **Local member group volunteers** [www.flickr.com/groups/2463314@N25/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/2463314@N25/)



Path maintenance at Sandwood

All the photos in this report are taken from the flickr sites where you can see credits for photographers and descriptions of where they were taken.

### Location of 2015 work parties

### 2015 dates

<b>Glenlude</b>	27 feb-2 mar
<b>Li &amp; Coire Dhorrcail</b>	14-15 mar
<b>E Schiehallion</b>	21-22 mar
<b>Glenlude</b>	28-30 mar
<b>Knoydart Foundation (Inverie)</b>	14-19 apr
<b>Li &amp; Coire Dhorrcail</b>	24-26 apr
<b>East Schiehallion</b>	8-10 may
<b>Western Isles (North &amp; West Harris Trusts)</b>	11-15 may
<b>Ennerdale</b>	18-19 may
<b>Sandwood</b>	23-25 may
<b>Ben Nevis</b>	30-may
<b>Quinag &amp; CALL partners</b>	15-19 jun
<b>Glenlude</b>	26-29 jun
<b>Glen Nevis</b>	10-13 jul
<b>Li &amp; Coire Dhorrcail</b>	1-2 aug
<b>Sandwood</b>	4-8 aug
<b>Glenlude</b>	11-16 aug
<b>Ben Nevis</b>	22-aug
<b>Quinag &amp; CALL partners</b>	26-29 aug
<b>Western Isles (North &amp; West Harris Trusts)</b>	7-11 sep
<b>Ben Nevis</b>	19-sep
<b>CALL (Tanera Mor)</b>	21-25 sep
<b>E Schiehallion</b>	26-27 sep
<b>Li &amp; Coire Dhorrcail</b>	3-4 oct
<b>Glenlude</b>	6-9 nov

**2016**

The programme for volunteering in 2016 appears at the John Muir Website at [www.johnmuirtrust.org/support-us/volunteer/conservation-volunteering](http://www.johnmuirtrust.org/support-us/volunteer/conservation-volunteering)

**Sandy Maxwell** Volunteer Work Parties Co-ordinator,

[workparties@johnmuirtrust.org](mailto:workparties@johnmuirtrust.org) 07766 380 663 3/2 69 Hyndland Street, Glasgow G11 5PS

In 2015 The John Muir Trust was grateful for financial contributions towards the work party programme from the **Linley Wightman Shaw Foundation** and the **Allan G King Charitable Trust**.



Beach cleaning at Oldshoremore



Lester repairs the fence above Poll a' Mhuineil



Building composting bins at Glenlude



NE Members group ditch blocking



Repairing fences at Glenlude



Building brush hedge at Glenlude