

John Muir Award Information Handbook



All you need to know to use the John Muir Award



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

It encourages people of all backgrounds to connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places.

www.johnmuiraward.org
[#JohnMuirAward](https://twitter.com/JohnMuirAward)



Name:

The main engagement initiative of
the John Muir Trust

You are warmly invited to get involved in the John Muir Award – a UK-wide environmental award scheme.

The John Muir Award challenges you to:

Discover a
wild place



Explore it



Do something to
Conserve it



Share your
experiences



This **Information Handbook** is available as an online pdf at www.johnmuiraward.org. The online version links to resources, forms, case studies and further information. The John Muir Trust main website is at www.johnmuirtrust.org.

If you notice any broken weblinks or out of date information, please contact info@johnmuiraward.org

Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| John Muir Award | <u>About the John Muir Award</u> 3 |
| | <u>John Muir Award ethos</u> 5 |
| | <u>John Muir Award Criteria, Challenges, Levels</u> 6 |
| | <u>Four Challenges</u> 8 |
| | <u>How to get involved</u> 10 |
| | <u>Who takes part?</u> 12 |
| | <u>Individuals & Families</u> 14 |
| | <u>Benefits</u> 15 |
| | <u>What the John Muir Award offers</u> 16 |
| | <u>Resources</u> 17 |
| | <u>Roles and Responsibilities</u> 19 |
| | <u>Training</u> 20 |
| | <u>John Muir Award Quality & Consistency</u> 21 |
| | <u>'Heart, Head, Hand'</u> 22 |
| | <u>Common Questions</u> 23 |
| Links | <u>Outdoor Learning & the John Muir Award</u> 25 |
| | <u>Schools' Curriculum & the John Muir Award</u> 26 |
| | <u>Inclusion & the John Muir Award</u> 28 |
| | <u>National Parks & the John Muir Award</u> 29 |
| | <u>Youth Work & the John Muir Award</u> 30 |
| | <u>Sustainability & the John Muir Award</u> 31 |
| | <u>Health & Wellbeing & the John Muir Award</u> 32 |
| | <u>Biodiversity & the John Muir Award</u> 34 |
| | <u>Outdoor Access & the John Muir Award</u> 36 |
| John Muir, John Muir Trust | <u>About John Muir</u> 39 |
| | <u>Introducing John Muir</u> 40 |
| | <u>The John Muir Trust</u> 41 |
| | <u>John Muir Award background</u> 42 |
| Forms | <u>John Muir Award Proposal Form</u> 43 |

John Muir Award

JOHN MUIR AWARD



About the John Muir Award

What is it?

The John Muir Award is an environmental award scheme focused on wild places. It supports people to connect with, enjoy and care for nature, landscape, and the natural environment - wild places.

- It does this through a structured yet adaptable scheme.
- It's for people of all backgrounds and ages – groups, families and individuals.
- It's non-competitive, inclusive and accessible.
- Its name comes from John Muir, the the Scots-born conservation pioneer known as 'the founding father of National Parks'.

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 of a world where wild places are protected, enhanced, and valued by and for everyone. The John Muir Award is its main engagement initiative.

The John Muir Award was set up to

- promote educational, social and personal development through engagement with wild places and involvement in conservation
- encourage an active environmental approach within organisations
- ensure that social circumstances don't exclude people from opportunities to experience wild places.

The John Muir Award is delivered through partnerships with many diverse organisations – youth groups, schools, clubs, Local Authorities, residential and outdoor centres, adult and family support groups, ranger services etc.

With advice and assistance from John Muir Award staff, these '**Award Providers**' (see pages 12-13) integrate the Award structure with their own outdoor and environmental activities to enable their participants, students, staff and volunteers achieve their own John Muir Award.

Families, individuals and small groups of all backgrounds also take part.

Why use it?

- To help appreciate and value nature, urban greenspace and wild landscapes.
- To encourage awareness, understanding and responsibility for wild places.
- To promote personal development and healthy living through outdoor experiences.
- To encourage an environmental agenda – for individuals and organisations.
- To recognise and celebrate achievements of each individual that meets Award Criteria.

There are three broad reasons for involvement

First Time

Groups and individuals new to the outdoors use the John Muir Award to help give focus, structure, ideas and support.

Doing More

Groups and individuals already doing some activities that relate to the John Muir Award use it as a catalyst for more activity, partnership links, and integration.

Recognition

Groups and individuals engaged with a wide range of places and activities, largely meeting John Muir Award Criteria, use it as a means of recognition.

The John Muir Award...

- isn't just about a traditional 'green' agenda – it's about adventure, personal growth, enjoyment, art, culture & creativity.
- easily links to local places and context – from school grounds and urban settings to National Parks, coastlines, rivers and mountain ranges.
- offers a structure for your own activities. It isn't a programme, and it doesn't have a set syllabus.
- offers a way of engaging with topics that some might find daunting or inaccessible - sustainability, biodiversity, citizenship, 'the environment'...
- can be used to link positive outdoor experiences to a range of themes – curriculum, healthy lifestyles, youth work, employability, wellbeing...
- is supportive – it can easily be used by non-outdoor specialists.
- is inclusive – social circumstances don't need to stop people from experiencing wild places.
- is simple to use and low on bureaucracy.
- is a catalyst for activity, for partnerships, for new thinking, for planning and inclusion.
- is easy to use alongside existing schemes, initiatives, programmes and schools' Curriculum.
- is free to use.

John Muir Award ethos

The John Muir Award is designed to be inclusive, 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/Is it for you?'* on page 12)
- is focused on wild places
- is non-competitive
- is fun and adventurous
- is challenging and progressive
- encourages personal responsibility for wild places
- promotes personal development
- offers an opportunity to explore values and spirituality
- is designed to promote partnership working
- has relevance to wider issues and contexts

It can be used to support an approach in which the environment is not seen in isolation or as an add-on, but an essential component that's at the heart of outdoor experience, of adventure, of learning, of creativity, of wellbeing.



John Muir Award Criteria, Challenges, Levels

Criteria

To achieve a John Muir Award, each participant must

- Meet four Challenges – Discover, Explore, Conserve, Share
- Complete the required time commitment
- Show enthusiasm and commitment towards their involvement
- Have an awareness of John Muir
- Understand what the John Muir Award is and why they are participating

Challenges

Four Challenges are at the heart of the John Muir Award.

They are designed to promote a holistic approach – including awareness, understanding, and action - and reflect John Muir's wilderness experiences.

To achieve a John Muir Award each individual participant engages in a range of activities that meet the following four Challenges:

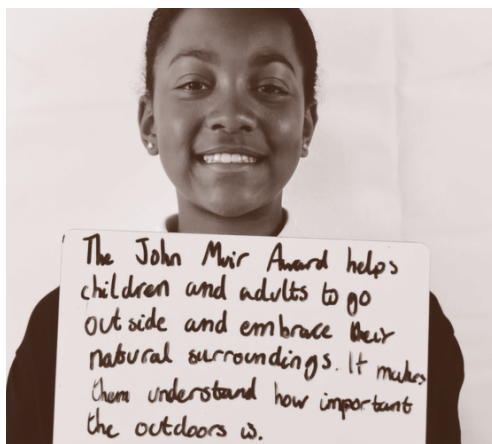
Discover a wild place

Explore its wildness

Conserve it

Share your experiences

See pages 8-9 for more on these Challenges.



Levels

There are 3 different Award Levels – **Discovery**, **Explorer** and **Conserver** – to encourage a progressive involvement.

The **time commitment** for each should be seen as a minimum, with the majority of time spent outdoors. It can be met by combining hours, sessions, or residential days. There is no upper limit on this time commitment. Time cannot be carried forward to the next level of the Award.

Start with the Discovery Award. If you want to do more, these same four Challenges – Discover, Explore, Conserve, Share - are repeated for each Level, with an increased level of involvement in time, activity, responsibility and ownership.

(It is possible to proceed directly to the Explorer Award or Conserver Award if a Proposal is sufficiently extensive and meets the time requirements. This must be discussed with Award staff before proceeding.)

Awards cannot be requested retrospectively. A Proposal Form should be submitted at least 2 weeks before the start of John Muir Award activity. (See page 10)

| Discovery Award | Explorer Award | Conserver Award |
|---|---|--|
| 4 days (or equivalent) minimum time commitment | 8 days (or equivalent) minimum time commitment | 20 days (or equivalent) time commitment, over at least 6 months |

Four Challenges - Discover, Explore, Conserve, Share – are met for each of these Levels.

Guidance is available online:

[‘Considering Ways to Progress Through John Muir Award Levels’](#)

Four Challenges

Where can you go and what can you do to meet these Challenges?
There's an almost limitless range of wild places and activities that can contribute to achieving a John Muir Award.

Discover a wild place

Where/what is your wild place (or places)?

- **Identify a wild place** (or places) on which to focus your Award activity.
- This can be school grounds, a local park, beach, woods, river, mountain or national park...
- It should have some natural character, and scope for at least 4 days' activity.
- You can identify a range of places, or a journey, on which to base your Award. *Note: sometimes this might be an obvious choice e.g. school or centre grounds; or it might need careful selection. Wherever it is, consider the questions below and how all participants will relate to your chosen wild place.*
- What is the natural character of your chosen place(s)?
- What makes it special or interesting for you/your group?
- Why is it a suitable place for your Award activity?

'Wilderness is where one feels oneself to be in a wild place.'

Aldous Huxley

Explore it

How will you get to know your wild place?

- Tell us what you'll do to **increase awareness and understanding**, to tune in and appreciate it. How will you experience, enjoy and find out more about your wild place(s)?

You might:

- Travel extensively, be adventurous – walk, camp, bike, canoe, climb, navigate.
- Visit at different times of day and night, in different seasons or weather conditions, alone or with others.
- Sit, look, listen - engage senses.
- Use suitable environmental activities and games.
- Embrace fun, be playful.
- Identify plants, animals, birds. Find out more about landscapes, habitats and living things (biodiversity), and how they connect. How is it affected by people?
- Make maps. Take photographs, films or sound diaries.
- Research local geology, natural and cultural history.

'I learned very early the difference between knowing the name of something and knowing something.'

Richard Feynman, American Physicist

Further information, ideas and links online. These Challenges promote a holistic approach to outdoor experiences. They reflect the approach that John Muir took during his travels and adventures.

Conserve it

How will you care for your wild place(s), take some personal responsibility, make a difference, put something back?

- Leave it in better shape, by taking practical action, by supporting a relevant issue and integrating Outdoor Access principles.
- Activities might include wildlife/citizen science surveys, litter cleanups and audits, tree, wildflower or shrub planting, or clearing invasive plants.
- Create or monitor habitats, build bat boxes or nest boxes.
- Adopt and clean up a pond, river or beach, or a local green patch.
- Campaign and inform others to highlight an environmental issue or help protect a wild place. Research and fundraise for a place or issue.
- Apply minimum impact approaches throughout your activity.

'...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?

- Tell others about what you've done – experiences, achievements, feelings, what's been learned. Celebrate!
- Reflect, review and discuss your adventures and experiences in wild places – do this during as well as after; informally or more formally.

You might:

- Make a display of photos, drawings, stories, poems, artwork.
- Organise a presentation with slides or photos.
- Make a film, or a sound diary.
- Keep a group diary, do some drama or poetry, or create some environmental art.
- Lead a guided walk around your wild place(s).
- Use newsletters, websites and social media.
- Share your experiences with each other, friends and family.
- Make the most of your John Muir Award Certificate presentation.

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

Kay Clark, Inverclyde Youth Connections

How to get involved

Find out more

...should you need to – via our [introductory film](#) (10 mins) and [case studies](#). See ‘Who takes part’ and ‘Is it for you?’ on page 12.

Plan

- Involve your participants in planning if appropriate – make sure they are keen to get involved.
- Think about what you’ll do to meet the four Award Challenges - link them with what you already do, or use them as a starting point to plan activity.
- There are [Resources](#) to help with this.
- Seek out local information and advice, and any permissions required for outdoor access.

Complete a 2 page Proposal Form

Use the John Muir Award [Proposal Form](#) (online or hard copy from Award staff) to describe where and how you will meet the four Award Challenges.

Send a copy to us, ideally by email (see [Contacts](#)) at least 2 weeks before starting. You can treat this as a draft for further discussion – it’s not a pass or fail exercise. (This is why it’s not called an Application Form). We’ll discuss your Proposal Form by phone, email or in person, and may 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.

Get started, get outside and get active!

[Introduce the John Muir Award](#) (and [John Muir](#)) at an early stage to all involved. It’s an individual award scheme, so each person should engage with, understand and meet Award Criteria. There are [Resources](#) to help with this.

Send us a Certificate Request Form

As you near completion, review whether your activity has been completed as outlined in your Proposal Form. Have Award Criteria been met by all participants? A [Four Challenge Review](#) can help with this. Seek guidance from Award staff if necessary.

Download a [Certificate Request Form](#) and submit by email (preferable), or post. You’ll be contacted to discuss or confirm this. **Please give us at least 2 weeks’ notice to prepare and send your certificates.**

Celebrate, and present your Awards

Celebrate and promote the achievement of participants. Invite friends and family, stakeholders, colleagues, local councillors, media etc... and make it an event to remember. Or choose keep it personal and meaningful as appropriate. Press release guidance is available from Award staff - **please let us see drafts of publicity materials.** Copies of articles are appreciated.

Find out more



Plan, complete a
Proposal Form



Get outside, get active



Review, Send
Certificate Request



Present your
John Muir Awards

Who takes part?

The John Muir Award is open to all. From school pupils and professors to prisoners and pensioners – a genuinely diverse cross-section of society participates.

All participants achieving a John Muir Award should understand and meet Award Criteria. Generally we find this works best at upper primary level and beyond, however we don't set rigid age guidelines. (Please see below).

Adults are welcome – indeed actively encouraged - to get involved too, alongside young people, students, or in their own groups, whatever the age.

We've created a [Family Award](#) that welcomes involvement as a family. This category can include all ages.

Participation can be through involvement in an organisation that is established as an **Award Provider**, or as an individual or small independent group or family.



Is it for you?

If you are unsure about the suitability of the John Muir Award for your group, please see the [Get Involved](#) web page guidance in the first instance, and speak to a member of Award staff if necessary. In our experience we advise that the John Muir Award isn't suitable for nursery or lower primary level groups. Younger children are welcome to participate in Family Awards as part of a family unit.

John Muir Award Providers

We term groups or organisations that successfully deliver the Award 'Providers'. 'Successful delivery' means that we've agreed a Proposal Form, registered activity, and approved a Certificate Request. This process creates an informal agreement between a Provider and the John Muir Award. At this point, a time-bound Provider Certificate is available (although if the process hasn't been straightforward we may ask to work through it a further time before a Provider Certificate is offered).

John Muir Award staff will freely provide:

- Support, guidance and advice on the delivery of the John Muir Award.
- Promotional material and resources as appropriate.
- Certificates to all individuals who successfully complete each Award.
- An annual Certificate to recognise John Muir Award Provider status.
- Opportunities to access John Muir Award Training courses and events (varied costs).

Award Providers:

- Promote the ethos of the John Muir Award.
- Ensure that all individuals for whom a Certificate is requested fulfil Award Criteria.
- Use John Muir Award processes, documents and timeframes to ensure effective registration and confirmation, and maintain relevant records.
- In conjunction with John Muir Award staff, provide suitable information, guidance and training opportunities for their staff/volunteers.
- Ensure open communication with John Muir Award staff (phone/email).
- Ensure that adequate Health and Safety measures are in place, and be covered by appropriate public liability and personal accident insurance.
- Share good practice in-house, and with other organisations, as appropriate.

You can find out more about Roles and Responsibilities on page 19.
Typically, groups such as

Youth Organisations

Ranger Services

Environmental Organisations

Schools

Outdoor & Residential Centres

Councils

Community groups

...run the John Muir Award for pupils, volunteers, members, participants.

Individuals & Families

What if I'm not part of a Group or Organisation?

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

A **Family John Muir Award** allows participation for children of all ages as part of a family group. This Award is a collective achievement for each family, rather than each individual.

Activities that might contribute include:

- A holiday or series of family outings to wild places
- Volunteering for local or national conservation issues
- 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, developmental or training courses e.g. drystone walling, Mountain Leadership, plant or bird identification, interpretation techniques...
- Staff away days
- Creative activities – painting, drawing, photography, film-making, writing articles or poems...



It's easy to get involved, and applies the same process as outlined on page 10.

"For me the John Muir Award was a great bonding experience with my family. I got to spend quality time with my kids...being out in the healthy fresh air and learning lots more about our environment - important knowledge for all of us. It was also a fun time spent with other families, all together as one happy team!"

Shona, 'With Kids' Families project



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
- Strengthens character values of cooperation, achievement, challenge, self-esteem...
- Opportunities for active learning
- Strengthens values relating to care, respect, environmental connection, belonging, sense of place, curiosity, responsibility...
- 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 CV, learner profile and Record of Achievement
- A nationally-recognised certificate for each John Muir Award level attained
- Helps promote healthy living, physical activity and relaxation

Benefits to organisations

- A tried and tested way to integrate an environmental approach with existing activity
- A way to actively involve staff and students in environmental awareness
- Strengthens values of care, respect, giving, belonging, sense of place...
- Values the landscape/locations that activity takes place in
- A catalyst for partnership working
- Recognises and celebrates activity and demonstrates it to others
- A holistic approach, with an easy-to-use, adaptable structure
- Enhances environmental engagement of staff, teachers, leaders
- A progressive structure, through three Levels, to maintain and develop involvement and activity
- A flexible scheme for schools to deliver curriculum activities and outcomes – 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

What the John Muir Award offers

Structure

The John Muir Award structure – Discover, Explore, Conserve, Share - enables a wide range of activities to contribute towards the achievement of an Award. It encourages people of all ages and backgrounds to connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places.

We have established this as a supported framework, with a range of materials and guidance available about all aspects of John Muir Award involvement.

Once a Proposal Form has been registered (see page 10), Award Providers and participants implement their own Award activity.

This structure and associated processes are the intellectual property of the John Muir Trust, with trademark pending.

Guidance, support & advice

John Muir Award staff provide guidance, at an appropriate level, in support of Award activity. They are experienced in discussing ways of integrating the John Muir 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, curriculum links etc.

Our aim is to ensure that achieving a John Muir Award is a positive experience for all concerned. The process of registering and involvement should ensure the integrity of the Award, be efficient, and enhance the work of participating organisations.



Resources to support your participation

Website

A wide range of up-to-date information can be found at www.johnmuiraward.org.

- **Information Handbook** (pdf version) – covers all the basics you need for finding out about and running the John Muir Award.
- **John Muir Award films** – includes an Introduction to the John Muir Award (also available as a dvd; 10 mins), John Muir Award and National Parks (4 mins), 'Back to the future' - what young people think of Muir (5 mins), plus films by Providers. Links to a suite of John Muir Trust films are available on Trust web pages.
- **Case Studies & Stories** – an array of examples of how the John Muir Award is used. These highlight a diversity of groups, activity, locations and themes.
- **Resource Guides** – pdf documents with a list of useful websites for more information on the themes of Sustainability, Outdoor Learning, National Parks, John Muir, Campaigning, Biodiversity, Wildlife Gardening, Surveys, Outdoor Access.
- **Key documents** – download a Proposal Form (for planning and registering your John Muir Award), Record Book (pdf version), a Four Challenge Review, and Certificate Request Form
- **Initiatives** – key websites, organisations and campaigns of interest to John Muir Award Providers.
- **What's New?** – latest John Muir Award newsletters, e-bulletin and news stories.
- **Training and events** – includes latest dates, locations and booking information.
- **Publications** – a collection of leaflets, documents and articles published by the John Muir Award.
- **Discover John Muir** - a John Muir web resource with information sources, activities, Muir-related events, and examples.

Information Handbook

This Handbook is available to leaders, teachers, staff and volunteers, families and individuals who are interested or involved in running the John Muir Award. It can be downloaded in pdf form from the Resources section of the John Muir Award website, or is available in hard copy format.

Record Books

Record Books give each participant an opportunity to capture their John Muir Award experiences. Each will be unique. It can be used for notes, descriptive work, drawings, painting, poetry etc. A Record Book can be used by individuals to track their progress through their Award involvement and provide a personal memento of their experiences.

We recommend that Record Books are not used to formally monitor or assess involvement.

Background information on the John Muir Award, and John Muir, is included. The four Award Challenges, its three Levels, and the time commitments for each are also highlighted.

Record Books are available as a print-friendly pdf (in Key Documents), wirebound hard copy or an online version. **Please note that they are not essential to Award participation, and many groups create their own resources for reflecting and sharing.**

Hard copy versions cost £1 each, to cover printing costs and postage. We first started making Record Books available for free when less than 1,000 people each year participated. When this became over 30,000 (and with a much higher quality free-to-download version available) this became a significant cost that we can no longer cover.

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 the 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 awarded to all successful 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.

When organisations are familiar and successful with the process of participation described on page 10, we can arrange an annual Certificate to recognise their Award Provider status.

Resource Guides

2-4 page Resource Guides are available in pdf format on the themes of: Sustainability, Outdoor Learning, National Parks, John Muir, Campaigning, Biodiversity, Wildlife Gardening, Surveys, Outdoor Access.

Each has an updated list of useful websites for more information.

The John Muir Award in Action - Case Studies, Films

Gain ideas, be inspired, hear how others use the John Muir Award, see what works.

View a wide selection of case studies, films and stories, under themes of: Youth Sector; Schools and Colleges; Adult Groups; Individuals and Families.

Roles and Responsibilities

Award Providers - Leaders & Organisations

Leaders – youth workers, teachers, volunteers - are key to the successful delivery of the John Muir Award with groups. Responsibilities of the Award Provider include using the process outlined on page 10, and ensuring that each participant meets Award Criteria (including individually meeting the four Challenges described on pages 8-9).

Crucially, the ethos of the John Muir Award should be communicated, ensuring that each participant takes part willingly, and benefits from their participation.

Safety

In providing activities that contribute towards the achievement of the John Muir Award, the Award Provider (and those participating on an individual basis) is wholly responsible for ensuring 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, although this isn't essential for Award delivery. On occasion, staff may decline Proposal Forms, or decline requests for Certificates.

The John Muir Trust and key partners

The John Muir Trust (along with partner organisations who employ John Muir Award staff) runs the Award as part of its core work, and oversees its management.

Training

Training

Leaders with the necessary skills, knowledge and attributes are integral to the delivery of the John Muir Award.

Attending training is not a requirement to be able to run the Award. Training is offered *in addition* to information and resources which are designed to give enough guidance to deliver the John Muir Award.

Training courses are available to help leaders to find out more about the ethos of the John Muir Award and practicalities of delivering it. They provide opportunities to network with other Providers, and to further develop their skills and confidence.

Courses are available throughout the UK.

Leader Training

This two-day residential course gives a thorough introduction to the relevant skills, knowledge and approaches needed for delivering the John Muir Award. Content is aimed at leaders already experienced in working with groups of young people, adults and families. These open-enrolment courses tend to bring together leaders from a wide range of sectors.

John Muir Award in Schools

This one-day course is for teachers, head teachers, classroom assistants, pupil support and youth workers, community learning staff, and all who support outdoor learning. It explores the relevant skills, knowledge and approaches needed for delivering the John Muir Award in a schools/education/curriculum context. With less time available and its specific focus, it is not as activity-based as the open-enrolment two-day residential training.

Tailored Training

Tailored training sessions are designed specifically for staff/volunteers from one organisation, area or group. Contact your regional John Muir Award member of staff to find out more and discuss options.

For more information, dates, venues and prices, visit the training page of www.johnmuiraward.org.

'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

John Muir Award Quality & Consistency

The John Muir Award is a unique experience for each individual that participates. Due to the many different locations used, and the wide range of activities carried out in meeting Award Criteria, every Award Provider delivers it in a way that's unique to them.

Whilst its flexibility is a key strength and appeals to Award Providers, it is essential to maintain an overall integrity in the delivery of John Muir Award experiences. **Fundamentally, anyone achieving a John Muir Award should meet its Criteria.**

It's important to note that the John Muir Award is not a set programme or syllabus. Neither is it 'accredited' or an 'accreditation. It can contribute to a Record of Achievement, and be part of Wider Recognition and Attainment outcomes.

A number of measures aim to support Award staff and Providers to achieve this, without creating excessive paperwork or overly formal systems.

- The **John Muir Award Proposal Form** is used to outline planned activity and proposed locations. It encourages a planning process that integrates four Challenges and is used to register the interest of an organization, family or individual. It is an important reference point for all parties involved, and enables staff to confirm that Award Criteria will be met, and give guidance and advice if appropriate.
- A **John Muir Award Provider** status (see page 12-13) confirms that an organisation is ensuring effective delivery, and making good use of relevant processes and paperwork. Mutual expectations are set and good practice takes place. The process of confirming this status gives opportunities to agree that Criteria are being met, and to explore and resolve any issues relating to Award provision.
- **Record Books** (page 17) 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. In some circumstances, Award staff may ask for this to be included as a required part of John Muir Award registration and participation.
- **Training courses** (see page 20) are available for all those interested in leading John Muir Award activities – though it is not an essential requirement for running the Award (reading this Information Handbook and discussing with staff can suffice). They are 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 consistent Award delivery amongst a number of staff.

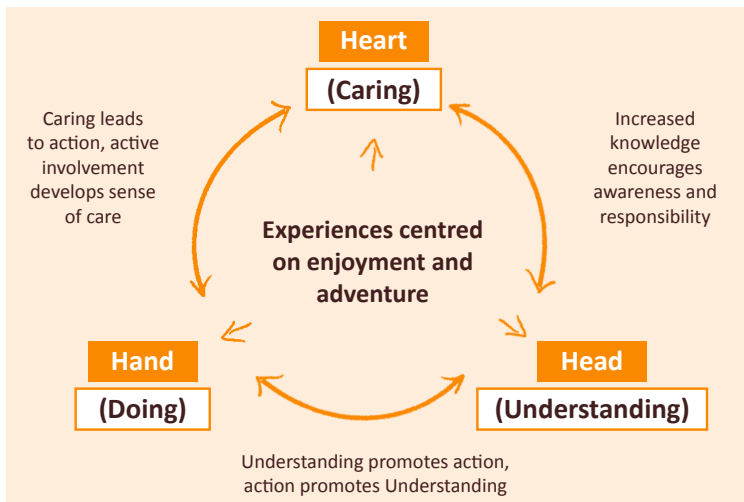
The continued success of the John Muir Award relies on the motivation of key staff and volunteers within Provider organisations to deliver the Award to a high standard, such that each individual Award is meaningful and respected.

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

'Heart, Head, Hand'

This 'Heart, Head, Hand' model proposes that an experience-based programme of activity should encourage people to Care, promote Understanding and give opportunities for practical Doing.

You may want to consider this holistic approach as you deliver or take part in the John Muir Award.



Based on an educational model promoted by Patrick Geddes

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.

Common Questions

Q Why does the John Muir Trust run the John Muir Award?

Essentially, it's a core part of the Trust's work towards a world where wild places are protected and enhanced and valued by and for everyone.

From the outset, the Award has been tied closely to Muir's ethos – one of care, curiosity, communication and creativity – and has kept Muir at its heart ever since. Its structure – Discover wild places, Explore them to encourage awareness and understanding, do something to Conserve them, and Share those experiences – invites participants to actively engage with this philosophy.

Q Is there an age limit?

We don't impose specific age restrictions and in principle it is open to all. In practice, those participating should have a grasp of the Award and its Criteria. Please see 'Is it for you?' (page 12), and speak to your Award contact in the first instance if unsure.

Q When are Awards presented?

Any time that fits in with the activities of an Award Provider – it's up to you. 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 or the outdoors - how do I get started?

This shouldn't be a barrier. Everyone has something to offer! 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?

Become familiar with the contents of this Information Handbook, and work through the process on page 10. See also pages 13 and 21.

Q Is there someone who can help me with my project?

John Muir Award staff are always happy to offer advice over the phone. We can also try to put you in touch with local contacts or national projects that may 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?

All online support material and certificates are provided free of charge, other than hard copy Record Books (£1 each, see page 18). 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?

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?

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.



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 and 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

See our [Outdoor Learning Resource Guide](#)

Schools' 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 Curriculum requirements. It is appropriate for upper primary and secondary school pupils (as well as adult learners) and can be used with whole year groups, class groups, small groups of learners, individuals and families.

You can use it:

- 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 residential experiences, field trips, 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/Learning for Sustainability, citizenship – in 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 (attainment) 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. 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, download or online 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. (Note that this is not an accredited award.)

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. The John Muir Award can also be a route to Professional Recognition.

The John Muir Award website includes 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 can be used to encourage the development of important life skills and a deeper understanding of core Curriculum subjects.

For more information see [John Muir Award and the National Curriculum](#)

“Participation in the John Muir Award has engaged the pupils in ways impossible to achieve if you spend the entire year sat behind a desk.”

Mr McAvoy, Teacher.

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 the National Qualifications framework. 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.

For more information see [John Muir Award and the Curriculum for Excellence](#)

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

Michael Will, Depute Head Teacher, Northfield Academy

Inclusion & the John Muir Award

Engaging with people from all backgrounds has been at the heart of the John Muir Award since it was launched in 1997. Every year at least 25% are achieved by people experiencing some form of disadvantage. This disadvantage may be related to age, ethnicity, health, unemployment or other factors. The Award is used by diverse organisations in work that aims to improve inclusion across a wide range of sectors.

- **Building employability skills** Organisations that work to build employability skills in young people and adults find that using the John Muir Award helps give real world experiences for developing transferable skills. They also value the nationally recognised certificate and its role in helping move people towards positive destinations.
- **Building positive family relationships** Family groups often participate, finding that this creates opportunities for positive, active, shared experiences in healthy environments that can be free to access.
- **Delivering the Curriculum** The John Muir Award framework can offer new and different ways to succeed. Schools and education support services making use of it have seen young people re-engage with learning and the curriculum through a more active and outdoor approach to education, helping to reduce attainment gaps.
- **Helping to overcome addiction** Making a positive contribution to the environment (promoted and given context through the Conserve Challenge) is often key to the success of outdoor-based recovery work. The opportunity for reflection through time in wild places, and associated sharing, is reported as an important benefit.

“The outdoor environment is very powerful in changing thought patterns and attitudes”

John Deeney, Phoenix Futures.

On-the-ground John Muir Award activity contributes to national policies across the UK focused on children, young people and families, health and the environment. Organisations often use it to help deliver government priorities that are relevant to them. For more information see [Inclusion, Wild Places and the John Muir Award](#).

The John Muir Award has been used successfully by Prison Services, NHS occupational therapy, further education colleges, Community Learning and Development teams and homeless charities, all in their work to improve the life chances of the people they support.

National Parks & the John Muir Award

“National Parks are some of the most special landscapes in this country, and the John Muir Award is a great way to understand more about them.”

Richard Leafe, Chief Executive of the Lake District National Park Authority

John Muir was instrumental in the foundation of National Parks system in America. 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. There are currently 15 National Parks in the UK, with 10 in England, 3 *Parciau Cenedlaethol* in Wales, and 2 in Scotland, with none in Northern Ireland.



The National Parks of **England and Wales** are areas of largely undeveloped and scenic landscape 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.

National Parks came to Scotland in 2002 with the designation of the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, followed in 2003 by the Cairngorms National Park.

National Park aims, or ‘statutory purposes’, are to:

- conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage
- promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the parks’ special qualities by the public

Additionally in Scotland to:

- promote sustainable use of natural resources
- promote sustainable economic and social development of communities

“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

See [John Muir Award National Parks Resource Guide](#) and find out more in this [article](#) from the John Muir Trust Autumn 2014 Journal.

Youth Work & the John Muir Award

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. It has three essential and definitive features:

- Young people choose to participate
- The work must build from where young people are
- It recognises the young person and the youth worker as partners in a learning process

Young people value experiences (Mannion, 2007), 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

The John Muir Award can be used in a youth work context to:

- encourage experiences of nature and the outdoors
- give a context for practical action for the environment
- promote opportunities to gain knowledge and skills
- foster a sense of responsibility and community engagement
- provide a framework and focus for a diverse range of activity, including use of technology, social media, arts and creative approaches
- offer links to networks and other agencies beyond a youth work setting
- celebrate achievement

The John Muir Award is suitable for residential and extended trips; it can be used to combine adventurous activity with a focus on the natural environment and responsibility. It can also be effective in encouraging young people to value their local area. 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 is included in [‘Amazing Things - A guide to youth awards in Scotland’](#). It can be used in conjunction with other youth awards such as the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award and Youth Achievement Awards.

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.

‘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

Sustainability & the John Muir Award

‘Sustainability’ can be summed up as ‘living on the planet as if we mean to stay here’.

It has environmental, social and economic dimensions, and refers to the long term maintenance and wellbeing of ourselves and the planet. In relation to the natural environment, sustainability relates to lots of different topics including climate change, energy use and renewables, outdoor access and impact, waste management, transport, pollution, biodiversity, and health.

‘Learning for Sustainability’ is an educational approach that encourages us to learn to live within the environmental limits of our planet and to build a just, equitable and peaceful society. It is essential for the wellbeing of all of us, and is an international priority. (UNESCO, 2013)

Sustainability and the John Muir Award

The John Muir Award encourages enjoyment and connection with wild places, supporting opportunities for direct experiences of nature as a way to explore sustainability issues¹. It promotes simple concepts of personal responsibility and making a difference in ways that are relevant and engaging to participants.

By connecting with nature, people are more likely to understand, value and care for it.

Research has identified cultural values (our ‘guiding principles’ for life) as one of the driving forces of people’s motivation to engage with ‘bigger-than-self’ sustainability themes. Nature experiences can impact on values, underpinning a concern for issues such as biodiversity and climate change, making people less materialistic and more willing to volunteer time to help others.

Use the [Sustainability Resource Guide](#) to find out more about how the John Muir Award links with sustainability and values, ways to communicate sustainability message,; and links to information and resources.

¹ Common Cause for Nature valuesandframes.org

Health & Wellbeing & the John Muir Award

'Fresh air comes into your body and all the bad stuff goes out, the stuff that makes people not well like angeriness and stressed out.'

John Muir Award Participant, aged 11, Drumchapel

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 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
- Co-operation 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

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.

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

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

'Children increase their physical activity levels when outdoors and are attracted to nature.'

Dr William Bird, 2007

Links to National Wellbeing Objectives

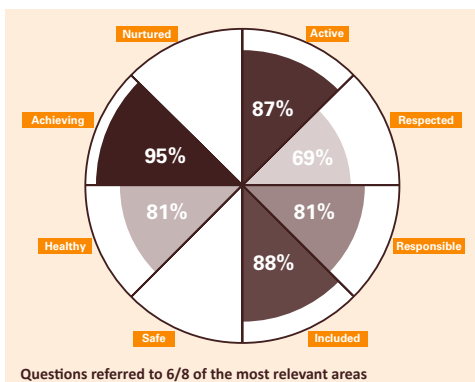
Evidence also suggests that a small improvement in wellbeing can help people to flourish. Through taking part in the John Muir Award people have the opportunity to improve their personal wellbeing.

'Five Ways to Wellbeing' is a set of evidence-based actions used by health boards across England.

Activity as part of a John

Muir Award can encourage participants to:

Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give.



The Scottish Government uses 8 indicators to measure wellbeing. Its objective is for every young person to be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included (SHANARRI). [A 2014-15 survey](#) of John Muir Award Providers showed that participating in the Award can help work towards this.

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, showed that:

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

Why is biodiversity important?

We're all part of this truly amazing diversity of life. More importantly, we need it!

- Biodiversity maintains the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat.
- Biodiversity supplies us with our raw materials e.g. fossil fuels, timber, soil and DNA.
- Biodiversity enhances our quality of life. Experiencing the natural world brings us pleasure and improves our understanding of our local area and our planet.
- History, tradition and culture are all influenced by landscape and biodiversity.
- Biodiversity provides us with the means of developing future benefits e.g. advances in medicine and agriculture.

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).

Many parts of the UK such as National Parks, nature reserves, community woodlands and greenspaces will have their own **Biodiversity Action Plans**, and supporting information ideas and resources. A **UK Biodiversity Framework** can be viewed at www.jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6189.

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).

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

For further information and links, see John Muir Award [Resource Guides](#) on Biodiversity, Surveys, Wildlife Gardening.

2011-2020 has been declared the **United Nations Decade on Biodiversity**. It aims to implement the UN Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and promote its overall vision of living in harmony with nature. www.cbd.int/2011-2020

Outdoor Access & the John Muir Award

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, such as grazing sheep, 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.

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.

See online Outdoor Access Resource Guide for further information and links

The law is different in Scotland to England and Wales. It's worth being informed so that you can make good decisions and judgements. 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.



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.

England and Wales

Details of the Countryside Code, education resources, and translations into Welsh are at www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code.

For more information about the countryside in Wales visit www.countrysidecodewales.org.uk.



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.

Incorporate outdoor access issues in the context of '**Explore**' activities. Who are the different users of an area? What do they use it for, what are their motivations and values? How do they work together?

Take responsibility (**Conserve**) by understanding these issues, along with rights and responsibilities, and acting accordingly. **Share** your knowledge and understanding to help others be responsible. This will increase your enjoyment, too.



John Muir, John Muir Trust

JOHN MUIR,
JOHN MUIR TRUST



About John Muir

John Muir Award participants should have an awareness of who John Muir was and his relevance today.

- A [Resource Guide](#) on Muir is available from our Resources web pages
- For extensive information, activities, examples and events, see www.discoverjohnmuir.com
- '[John Muir: Earth-Planet, Universe](#)' is a free-to-download graphic novel telling Muir's life story (with teachers' notes)
- What do young people think of John Muir? Watch '[John Muir: Back to the Future](#)' (5 mins)

John Muir (1838–1914) urged everyone to 'do something for wildness and make the mountains glad.' He's considered to be the founder of the modern world conservation movement.

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 mid-west, 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.

Introducing John Muir

Doing the John Muir Award is all about experiencing wild places. Because it carries the name of John Muir, and aims to share the ethos of the conservation pioneer, it makes sense to know at least something about who he was and what he did. There's no need for this to be dry, dull, academic, or a history lesson. It can be interactive, creative, technology based, active....

Here are ways that lots of Award Providers enjoy doing this, and places to find more information:



John Muir Resource Guide

An overview of resources and links available, including a brief biography, quotes and a bibliography.



Mission: Explore John Muir

A free e-book with a variety of activities that challenge people of all ages to discover the world around them. 200,000 web hits to date.



John Muir, Earth-Planet, Universe

A graphic novel, plus pupil activities and teaching notes, telling Muir's life story in a colourful, accessible way. Free to download.



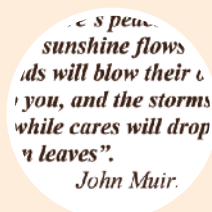
John Muir: Back to the Future

A 5 minute film asking young people if Muir is relevant today. Use it to kick off discussions about who inspires us, who has something to say.



John Muir Card Game

An interactive activity with Q&A cards to match up and find out more about John Muir.



Muir Quotes

Print out quote cards (or find your own) to stimulate discussion.

Find all of these easily at www.discoverjohnmuir.com, and see examples of how others have linked Muir into their activities.

The John Muir Trust

The John Muir Trust's vision is of a world where wild places are protected, enhanced, and valued by and for everyone.



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 Dhorraic in Knoydart, Torrinn, Strathaird and Sconser (all on the Isle of Skye), Sandwood in Sutherland, Quinag in Assynt, Glenludie 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.

A key part of its work is to campaign to protect wild land and to influence policy to support its objectives.

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 as a Group Member. For details on membership, contact the main John Muir Trust office, or membership@johnmuirtrust.org.

www.johnmuirtrust.org

John Muir Award background

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 to their work 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 the John Muir Award was launched at Dunbar in February 1997, it was designed to be:

- Youth centred, though available to adults and families
- 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 across the UK in both formal and informal education. There has also been 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.

For further background articles and publications you'll find a range of Publications on the Resources page of the Award website.



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 helps ensure that your Proposal will lead to successful completion of Awards.

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.

Refer to Resources page at johnmuiraward.org for Information Handbook and Award Criteria.

Send a copy of your Proposal Form to your appropriate regional Award contact at least **2 weeks** before starting. If not known, please click on Contacts at johnmuiraward.org. Alternatively, send to info@johnmuiraward.org, or John Muir Award, 41 Commercial Street, Edinburgh EH6 6JD

JOHN
MUIR
AWARD

wild places:
DISCOVER
EXPLORE
CONSERVE
SHARE

| | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| contact person | <input type="text"/> | date | <input type="text"/> |
| group/organisation or individual/family | <input type="text"/> | | |
| address | <input type="text"/> | | |
| | <input type="text"/> | postcode | <input type="text"/> |
| phone | <input type="text"/> | e-mail | <input type="text"/> |
| mobile | <input type="text"/> | web | <input type="text"/> |
| Are any organisations or partners helping towards this Award? | | | |
| <input type="text"/> | | | |

Summary of Award Proposal Select Award level Discovery Explorer Conserver

Outline the main aims and themes of what you plan to do. What is/are your main reason/s for using the John Muir Award?

Group background:

Include details such as: who the group is, age ranges, group size, any referral process, other relevant points.

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 participating? participants leaders/staff

Record books: 1: Download print-ready PDF from website Resources page **OR**
2: Request hard copies (1 per participant/leader, £1 each)

Outline how you plan for all individuals involved to meet the Four John Muir Award Challenges.

See johnmuiraward.org for information, resources, ideas and case studies. Consider how you will introduce John Muir into your Award activity.

| | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|--|
| <p>Discover a Wild Place</p> <p>Where/what is your wild place (or places)?</p> <p>This can be school grounds, local park, beach, woods, river, mountain or national park...</p> <p>Briefly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Where will your activity take place? (Note all the places you will visit).■ What is the natural character of your chosen place(s)?■ What makes it special for you/your group?■ Why is it a suitable place for your Award activity? | <p>PLACE</p> | <p>PUT BACK</p> | <p>Conserve it</p> <p>How will you care for your wild place(s), take some personal responsibility, make a difference, put something back?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Take practical action for nature - wildlife or pollution surveys, litter picks and audits, tree or shrub planting, grow plants for wildlife or clear invasive plants, create or monitor habitats...■ Campaign and inform others to highlight an environmental issue or help protect a wild place.■ Apply minimum impact approaches to your activity. |
| <p>Explore it</p> <p>Tell us what you'll do to increase your awareness and understanding. How will you experience, enjoy and find out more about your wild place(s)?</p> <p>You might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Visit it at different times of day and night, in different seasons, alone or with others.■ Travel extensively - walk, camp, bike, canoe.■ Sit, look, listen - engage senses.■ Identify and find out more about landscapes, habitats and living things (biodiversity), and how they connect.■ Make maps. Take photographs. <p>Research local geology, natural and cultural history.</p> | <p>ACTIVITIES</p> | <p>SHARE</p> | <p>Share your experiences</p> <p>Tell others about what you've done - experiences, achievements, feelings, what's been learned. Celebrate!</p> <p>Reflect, review and discuss your adventures and experiences in wild places - do this during as well as after, informally or more formally.</p> <p>You might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Make a display of photos, drawings, stories, poems, artwork.■ Make a group diary - as a book, wall display or film.■ Organise a presentation.■ Lead a guided walk around your wild place(s)■ Use newsletters, websites and social media. |

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

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Page 5 Robert Ayton

Page 6 Donibristle Primary School, Ardroy OEC

Page 12 David Pyper/George Watson's College

Page 14 Ian Stewart

page 16 Hannah Chivral/www.facebook.com/wildeveryday

page 37 Toby Clark

Who to contact

If you'd like more information about the **John Muir Award**, see www.johnmuiraward.org or:

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PH16 5AN

Tel: 01796 470080

Email: admin@johnmuirtrust.org

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Partners and Funders



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