



THE  
JOHN  
MUIR  
WAY

# A celebration of youth engagement for Scotland's Year of Young People



Helping to deliver the

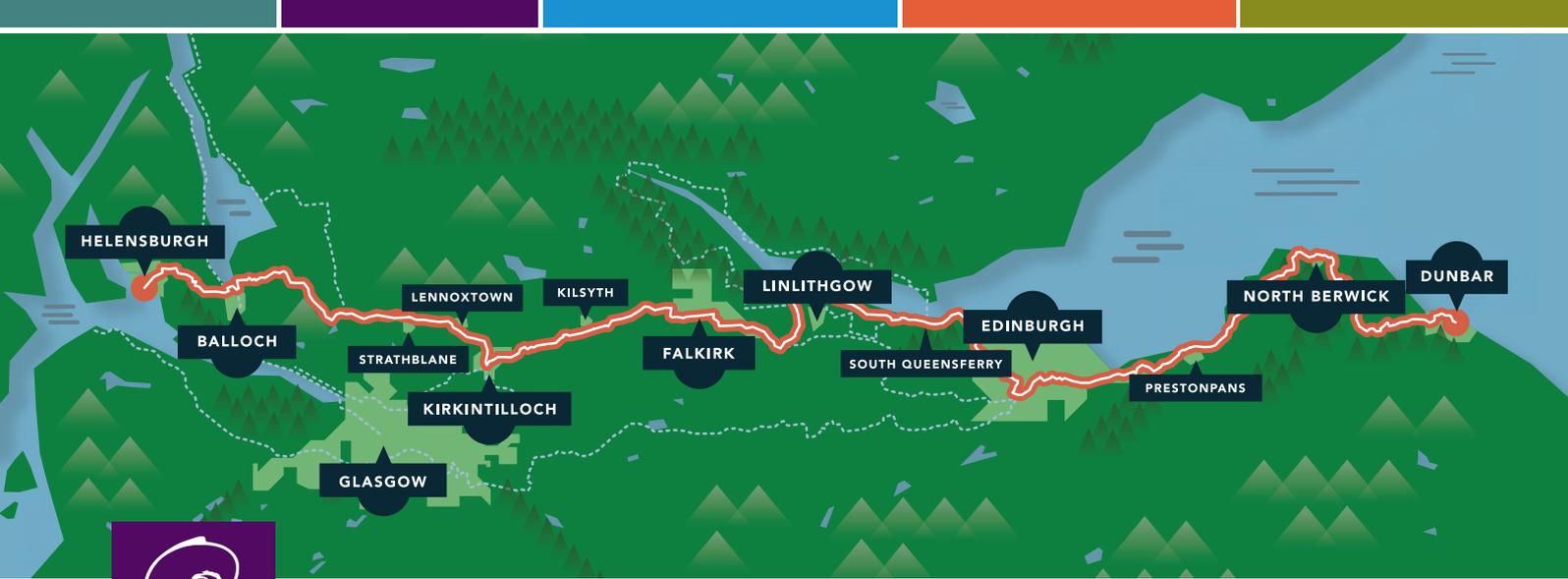


Central Scotland Green Network



SUPPORTING

year of young people  
bliadhna na h-òigridh  
2018



## What is the John Muir Way?

The John Muir Way is a long distance route like no other, running right through the heart of central Scotland. It is one of Scotland's Great Trails and is within 5 miles of over 1.3 million people. The John Muir Way offers as much to local communities as it does to long distance walkers and cyclists.

*"An outstanding coast to coast route across the diverse landscapes and rich heritage of central Scotland; easily accessible and attractive to local people, businesses and visitors, and providing opportunities for all to increase understanding of John Muir's legacy and philosophy through getting closer to nature."*

## Year of Young People 2018

Here, for Scotland's Year of Young People, we celebrate some of the many ways that young people from all backgrounds are using and benefiting from the John Muir Way, and the organisations whose work supports this. These examples demonstrate the value of the John Muir Way to young people as a place for nature connection, biodiversity action, outdoor learning, community activity, training and skills, adventure and resilience, curiosity and creativity, inclusion, health and wellbeing. They also show the breadth of collaboration and partnership that has grown around the John Muir Way.

See how this work is supporting the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework outcomes throughout this document.



# Biodiversity Action



*We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment*

## The John Muir Pollinator Way

Buglife's [John Muir Pollinator Way survey](#) and Central Scotland Green Network Trust's [Planting for Pollinators resources](#) help create and enhance habitats along the John Muir Way.

Over 200 schools across the 3km John Muir Way corridor received Planting for Pollinators resources – helping to enrich curriculum learning for 3,500 primary and secondary pupils. Ten pollinator sites have been created with young people to provide vital homes for wildlife. Biodiversity action has helped transform parks in East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, Falkirk, West Lothian and Edinburgh. Future partnership working aims to enhance a further 25 sites along the route over the next few months.



## Falkirk's Pollinator Way

Through Buglife and Falkirk Council, a further 133 pupils from primary schools have helped plant wildflowers as seed and plug plants at Policy Bing, Bantaskine Estate and Camelon Public Park, all within 1km of the John Muir Way. These meadow areas are thriving with life and providing vital homes for nature. Taking pupils and teachers out of the classroom and into their local greenspace has significant benefits to health and wellbeing – an essential part of improving attainment.

**Pupils from Craighead Primary School planting a total of 1,000 pot grown wildflowers at Kincaid Park, supported by East Dunbartonshire Council's Streetscene Team and Countryside Ranger Service.**



**Planting for Pollinators along the John Muir Way - pupils from St. Maurice's High School working with Buglife to create wildflower habitat along the John Muir Way.**

**Over 200 pupils have been involved so far in the Planting for Pollinators along the John Muir Way project, with many more opportunities in the year ahead.**





## Paddle Pick-ups

Sustrans and Scottish Canals offered a unique opportunity for young people to participate in a water-based litter pick-up on a stretch of the National Cycle Network in Edinburgh, which is also the Union Canal towpath and John Muir Way. One participant, Kyle, got involved through Young Scot Active Rewards to help him complete his Queen's Scout Award.

*"Personally, I think the event was great - it was my first time canoeing and I loved it!"*

*"Thanks for this opportunity which has helped me get one step closer to completing my Queen's Scout Award."*  
- Kyle

Scottish Waterways Trust and Scottish Canals worked with young people from Falkirk Community Trust to carry out canoe-based litter picks on the Forth & Clyde Canal between Bonnybridge and Falkirk. The young people achieved the John Muir Award, Saltire Award for Volunteering and a Paddle Power Certificate. Over the eight week programme they collected 36 bags of litter, traffic cones, trolleys and various other household objects.

*One participant used this experience when successfully applying to volunteer overseas. Another stated that the canal project increased their knowledge of impact of litter and would challenge others if they saw litter.*

*They also said their biggest achievement was when they saw the bags of rubbish.*

- Falkirk Community Trust

## St Ninian's High School - John Muir Way Consultation

Sustrans provides support to schools in becoming more active - building young people's skills, confidence, health and wellbeing. St Ninian's High School in Kirkintilloch - the first Cycle Friendly secondary school in East Dunbartonshire - makes frequent trips on the John Muir Way, supported by their Sustrans cycling officer. A group of pupils cycled from Kirkintilloch to Twechar as part of a consultation workshop with the Central Scotland Green Network Trust, to help shape a major funding application for the John Muir Way.

*The John Muir Way is a "great place to go in all seasons for all ages."*

- Participant



## Twechar Healthy Living & Enterprise Centre

A youth group at the Twechar Healthy Living & Enterprise Centre made the most of their proximity to the John Muir Way by completing expeditions on sections of the route. The group walked from Dunbar to North Berwick, and some also cycled from Twechar to Edinburgh. Across a range of groups and outings, staff and group members at the Healthy Living Centre have completed the entire John Muir Way, allowing them to share their experiences with others who use the centre.

# Nature Connection



We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment

## Larbert High School Conservation Week

In partnership with the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative, Falkirk Council and Buglife Scotland, 150 pupils volunteered on the John Muir Way near Bo'ness. They explored and litter picked over 8km of the trail between Blackness and Kinneil. Students surveyed the wildflowers and bugs at Grangepans meadow on the John Muir Way. Giving young people opportunities to care for our environment impacts positively on their learning.



*"We had an amazing time doing some conservation work along the John Muir Way!!"*

- Larbert High School



## Easter Carmuir Primary School

Under the Trees and Scottish Waterways Trust worked with primary 6 pupils from Easter Carmuir Primary School in Camelon over several sessions around the Falkirk Wheel and John Muir Way. Participants learned about the natural and built heritage of the area and undertook a conservation task at the Secret Garden. All participants successfully gained the John Muir Award and a Heritage Hero Award from Archaeology Scotland.

## New Stevenston Senior Youth Group

Students from Brannock and Taylor high schools in North Lanarkshire explored a section of the John Muir Way as part of their John Muir Award. They created a [short film](#) sharing their learning and reflections.

*"During the hottest week of the year we walked from Falkirk along the John Muir Way to Blackness. This was exhausting but we saw some great sights like swans protecting their young, baby ducks in the canal and forest that looked like it was from a fantasy movie."*

*"I liked doing the walk, being outdoors and enjoying nature."*

- Students



## Jonathan - John Muir Conserver Award

Jonathan, a young person and youth worker based in Edinburgh, focused on the John Muir Way as part of his own personal John Muir Conserver Award. The [John Muir Award](#) is the main engagement initiative of the John Muir Trust, encouraging people of all backgrounds to connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places.

*"I have used different sections of the John Muir Way, almost always as a place for nature. The John Muir Way has a story to it and this story brings its wild places to life. I've seen this in the way people want to conserve the path in a way they wouldn't do to 'any old park' round the corner. They feel as though they are a part of something when they are conserving it, and I certainly feel a part when I walk along it."*

- Jonathan

906 young people have achieved their John Muir Award using the John Muir Way this year - a 38% increase from 2017.



# Training & Skills



We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society



## canal college®

At canal college®, developed in partnership with Scottish Waterways Trust, young people learned practical and traditional heritage skills outdoors on Scotland's canals. The 14 week programme helped them to build confidence, make friends and gain new skills. The programme took place in the Falkirk area, which includes the John Muir Way, as well as in Inverness and Bowling. Participants gained an SVQ in Cultural Heritage and also earned the John Muir Award.

## Green Action

Scottish Waterways Trust Green Action is a training and development programme based on the Forth & Clyde Canal around the Falkirk Wheel area. The programme offered 16-24 year olds the opportunity to learn practical outdoor and employability skills in a supportive environment. Participants achieved an SCQF level 4 Employment in the Outdoors Award, Emergency First Aid, John Muir and Saltire Awards. They improved their resilience, health and mental wellbeing and were proud of the tangible improvements they made outdoors in their community.



## East Lothian Council Junior Rangers

The Junior Ranger programme offers young people aged 11-18 an insight into the work of a countryside ranger, with opportunities to carry out conservation work, wildlife monitoring and exploration of their local wildlife. Many of the tasks that the group undertake are on countryside sites along the John Muir Way. Recent sessions included grassland scything at Longniddry Bents and a spider identification course at Yellowcraig.

*Working with the Ranger Service "helps my physical and mental wellbeing because most of the time we are outside in less urban areas and doing physical work."*

- Fraser, East Lothian Junior Ranger

## Water of Leith Conservation Trust – Drystone Walling

Youthbuild, an Action for Children employability scheme, works towards getting young people into the workplace either on building sites or apprenticeships. The Drystone Walling Association and Youthbuild came together to run a training opportunity at Balgreen Community Garden on the John Muir Way in Edinburgh, as part of a Tesco "Bags of Help" funded scheme. This was part of a wider Balgreen Garden project that introduced young people to traditional countryside skills.



*"It's the best thing I've been on. Every one of my friends and family that have been here have always ended up getting work out of it or apprenticeships and that's what I want to get out of it as well."*

- Young participant (Youthbuild)



## Kinneil Coastal Rangers Project

Falkirk Employment Training Unit recruited trainees for the Kinneil Coastal Rangers Project. After initial training they progressed into employment through The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) Modern Apprenticeship scheme where they are now working towards their SVQ level 2 in Environmental Conservation and carrying out estate management tasks at Kinneil. The John Muir Way passes through the estate and the Coastal Rangers have made a big impact in improving footpaths and managing the woodlands.

*"I think it's made me healthier, and I think I've got physically stronger because it's different to what you're used to and it's a lot more graft than school. It's a bit of a culture shock when you come here at first but once you get used to it, it's pretty good."*

- Kai, Modern Apprentice

# Community Engagement



*We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe*

## North Light Arts – Natural Magic

Natural Magic is a community project designed by North Light Arts to bring younger and older people together through creative projects and tea parties at two community gardens in Dunbar and on the John Muir Way in East Lothian. Natural Magic ran mindfulness after-school workshops amid the natural smells, textures and sounds of the beach at the end of the John Muir Way in Dunbar. Participants listened to the sounds of the sea while relaxing amongst friends which brought peace to many busy, anxious minds.



## Bo’ness Natural Connections

Funded by Scottish Natural Heritage and Falkirk Council, artists Room 8 Studio worked with the local community in Bo’ness to explore their connections with nature and with the industrial heritage of this part of the John Muir Way. Pupils from Bo’ness Academy learned film-making skills and carried out intergenerational research which led to the creation of bespoke benches now installed on the Bo’ness foreshore. One of the students who took part used the [film](#) in their portfolio for their successful application to Glasgow School of Art.

## Nature Jam

Thirty young people from Tulloch, Haldane Youth Services and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Youth Committee joined a [#NatureJam](#) event in Balloch supported by Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, John Muir Trust, The Conservation Volunteers and West Dunbartonshire Greenspace. The team removed a heap of invasive Himalayan Balsam, built a new path in Balloch and tested their hand at Japanese Printing (Hapa Zome) using leaves.



*“Being here today has made me feel calm.”*

- Participant

# Curiosity & Creativity



*We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely*



## Zeki Basan, Film-maker

Zeki, a young adventurer from the Cairngorms, created a film *The Wild Along the Way* of his experiences walking the John Muir Way as part of his John Muir Conserver Award. This film was supported by the Central Scotland Green Network Trust and the Des Rubens Bill Wallace Grant (John Muir Trust).

*“I’ve really, really enjoyed my time on the walk. It’s not only a sense of achievement, but it makes you realise how lucky we are in Scotland to have such beautiful wild places to come to, and how easy it is to access.”*

- Zeki

## STRiVE Adventure

Trainees from STRiVE Adventure in East Lothian shared their wondering and ponderings on the John Muir Award in a short [film project](#). Participants captured wild places along the John Muir Way using their phone cameras, adding their own Muir-style narration.

*“Sun shining, fire crackling, sharing, leaving no trace. The waves bombarded upon the resilient rocks. Water erosion sculpting and changing the land as it chooses.”*

- Participant reflections and observations



## With thanks to the organisations featured in this report:

Action for Children  
Buglife Scotland  
Central Scotland Green Network Trust  
East Dunbartonshire Council  
East Lothian Council  
Falkirk Community Trust  
Falkirk Council  
Haldane Youth Services  
Inner Forth Landscape Initiative  
John Muir Trust  
Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority  
North Light Arts  
Room 8 Studio  
Scottish Canals  
Scottish Natural Heritage  
Scottish Waterways Trust  
STRiVE Adventure  
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Twechar Healthy Living & Enterprise Centre  
Under The Trees  
Water of Leith Conservation Trust  
West Dunbartonshire Council  
Young Scot

This celebration report was collated and published by the [Central Scotland Green Network Trust](#) and [John Muir Trust](#). With thanks to all the organisations and young people who provided the examples presented.



Follow the John Muir Way on [Facebook](#) (@thejohnmuirway), [Instagram](#) (@johnmuirway) or [Twitter](#) (@johnmuirway) and find out more at [www.johnmuirway.org](http://www.johnmuirway.org)

**The John Muir Way Partnership Group** comprises Argyll & Bute Council, Central Scotland Green Network Trust, The City of Edinburgh Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, East Lothian Council, Falkirk Council, Forest Enterprise Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland, John Muir Birthplace Trust, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, NFU Scotland, NHS Health Scotland, North Lanarkshire Council, Scottish Canals, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage, Stirling Council, Sustrans, VisitScotland, West Dunbartonshire Council and West Lothian Council.



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**Images:** front cover, pg1 bottom and pg2 bottom left - Becky Duncan / Open Aye c.i.c, pg1 middle and pg3 middle - Paul Herley, pg2 top - East Dunbartonshire Council, pg2 bottom right - Kirsty Grant, pg3 top left, pg4 top left, pg5 top left and right - Lisa Sneddon, pg3 bottom left - Andrew Jordan, pg4 top right - Falkirk Council, pg4 middle right - New Stevenston Senior Youth Group, pg4 middle left - Jonathan Kemsley, pg4 bottom - David Pyper, pg5 middle left - Jen Newcombe, pg5 middle right - Charlotte Neary, pg5 bottom left - Graham Burns, pg6 top right - Carey Douglas-Carnegie, pg6 top left - Room 8 Studio, pg6 middle right - Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, pg6 bottom left - Zeki Basan, pg6 bottom right - Portobello High School.

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