



Countryside Jobs Service

Focus on the Next Generation

In association with Action for Conservation

2 December 2019



Action for Conservation: Our work building the next generation of environmental leaders



Young people on Action for Conservation's residential camp
(Action for Conservation)

This past summer, an oil chief executive labelled Greta Thunberg and her network of young school strikers the 'greatest threat' to the fossil fuel industry. We shared this news amongst our team with great excitement and hope. It is a strong sign that the momentous global youth-led movement, that's standing up to the most destructive powers on our planet, is having an impact.

Greta's school strike campaign builds on the hundreds of movements started by young environmentalists before her – including 18-year-old Tokata Iron Eyes, who co-led the historic protests at the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, and Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, the 19-year-old founding director of Earth Guardian, just

to name a few - and the many movements that exist alongside her. These movements demonstrate what happens when young people are inspired, empowered and angry and have a clear alternative vision for a world that is greener, fairer and well, still exists. Supporting young people to lead change by sharing their voice and taking hands on action is what drives our work at Action for Conservation.

Action for Conservation was founded five years ago with the aim of empowering young people from diverse backgrounds to become the next generation of environmental leaders. When the organisation was founded we had no idea that the youth-led environmental movement would evolve to what it is today. We were, however, aware of some very troubling statistics. UK wildlife has suffered significant damage over the past 40 years, with over 40% of species now in decline. The environmental sector is also failing to reap the benefits of a diverse workforce; just 0.6% of the workforce identifies as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. This has an impact on young people of colour and other minority groups, as it creates the misconception that the environmental movement is only for white middle-class people and makes them less likely to fight to protect nature when they're older.

Our work aims to flip these statistics on their head by doing things differently and working with teenagers, a group that is underserved by the sector, and specifically teenagers from cities with little early childhood experiences in nature. We lead a series of linked programmes that support young people to engage with environmental issues on their own terms and then develop the skills and knowledge to take action in meaningful ways, eventually building to a point where they feel equipped with the right skills and confidence to join the growing movement of young people taking action for people and the planet.



Young person tree planting during a residential camp
(Action for Conservation)

It starts with our WildED programme, which brings the magic of nature into schools in urban area across the country. Through WildED we create safe spaces for young people to explore environmental issues and take action in ways that are meaningful and relevant to them. The WildED programme is supported by early-career environmentalists who share their expertise whilst helping young people connect their ideas to local campaigns and projects. Increasingly, we are helping young people understand how conservation issues intersect with issues related to social and environmental justice to ignite a passion in young people whose interests lie outside of the 'traditional' conservation space.



Winners of the North West WildED Dragons' Den Event
(Action for Conservation)

WildED participants are then invited to join our residential camps, which we run at National Trust properties in National Parks throughout the country. Here, young people from diverse backgrounds come together for five days to build on their environmental knowledge and skills, get up close and personal with nature through bird ringing, stargazing and outdoor adventures and create new connections – both with people and nature – that motivate them to take action when they return home. Our camps are supported by early career volunteers from a wide range of organisations, including: WWF, the Blue Marine Foundation, Step Up to Serve, the Wildlife Trusts, British Trust for Ornithology and environmental campaigners, filmmakers and artists who inspire and educate participants with their experiences and expertise. The camps are often hailed by young

people as 'lifechanging experiences' – feedback we're really proud of.

Camp participants are then invited to join our Ambassador Programme for a year of structured support and mentoring as they lead change in their communities and find their voice nationally. For us, this is where the magic really happens; the Ambassador Programme is the foundation for our work to build a youth movement for nature. Our Ambassadors have created community gardens, organised climate conferences with schools in their community, delivered TEDx talks, led workshops and assemblies, organised local school strikes and other protests, volunteered with conservation organisations, spoken at international conferences and set up youth ranger groups. Many of our Ambassadors have also gone on to successfully apply for leadership opportunities with other organisations, including the #iwill campaign, Groundwork, the NCS Regional Youth Board and London Wildlife Trust's Keeping It Wild Forum. And increasingly, our Ambassadors are driving systemic change in big NGOs and Government to shape youth involvement in environmental decision making.



Young people taking part in ecological surveys at the Penpont Estate
(Action for Conservation)

After years of supporting our Ambassadors to access opportunities with our brilliant partner organisations, the moment came this past summer to launch our very own conservation initiative: the Penpont Project. The Penpont Project is the largest youth-led nature restoration project of its kind in the world and aims to reverse ecological and climate breakdown whilst creating a global gold standard for youth-led environmental action. Taking place on a 2,000-acre estate in the Brecon Beacons National Park, the project is run by a Youth Leadership Group of twenty 12 - 17 year olds from diverse backgrounds who are making decisions in partnership with the landowners and tenant farmers. Whilst still in its infancy, the project will

demonstrate what happens when young people have opportunities to transform their passion into impactful environmental efforts on a large scale. We hope it will provide a blueprint for others who want to trial a similar approach.

This feature highlights the many brilliant organisations and individuals supporting the youth-led environmental movement, and we've had the pleasure of working with many of them. As we bear witness to species decline and ecosystem collapse, and with just twelve years left to limit the worst impacts of climate breakdown, we must work together to act on the positive vision for the future that young people are articulating. To do this, we need to redress the balance of power and give young people from all backgrounds meaningful opportunities to be part of environmental decision making and shaping the solutions we so desperately need.



Young people on Action for Conservation's residential camp
(Action for Conservation)

To learn more about our work and explore how we can work together please email our team at info@actionforconservation.org.

www.actionforconservation.org

Our 'Big BeeWalk Data' research competition challenges students aged 11-19 to use the Bumblebee Conservation Trust's BeeWalk data, to produce their own unique research project to help bumblebees. The winning research will be published in the next annual BeeWalk report and the school will receive a £250 cash prize.



Young people are making a stand for the natural world and this project will help them to develop the skills needed to contribute to the research that will inform future conservation. For more information, visit bumblebeeconservation.org

PECT is a charity that aims to make places better for people and the planet. We promote sustainable practices to help protect our environment now and to leave a legacy for future generations. Positive change to create greener, healthier places is at the heart of what we do. See www.pect.org.uk

'How Healthy is your Rainforest?' asks children to contribute to real scientific research by looking closely at woodland and recording data on what they find. This information will help us to understand more about these woods and manage them better. Request free packs for your setting at <https://c-js.co.uk/36CkI0o>

A great range of opportunities for young people interested in learning more about the natural world. Have fun, learn something new and stand out from the crowd. We are a charity that wants to help people understand and be inspired by the world around us. <https://c-js.co.uk/2QQVR3I>

Forest School intervention through Forest Schools Birmingham CIC is increasingly being recognised on a Parliamentary Level as a means of supporting young people into good mental wellbeing. We have been recognised by The Prime Ministers Big Society Initiative and are a contributor to the Parliamentary Review 2020. To find out how to train with us visit www.forestschoolsirmingham.com

We are a co-operative youth movement open to everyone! We support children to take the lead and change their world through weekly group activities and camping trips. Woodcraft Folk activities develop children's understanding and respect of the world around them. info@woodcraft.org.uk
www.woodcraft.org.uk/where

A hidden oasis, where schools and families can be inspired by nature. School sessions exploring different habitats and investigating where food comes from nestle alongside an established supported volunteering scheme. In school holidays families can enjoy the 4.5 acre site; indulging in natural play or a multigenerational workshop. www.iverenvironmentcentre.org

Do you want your school grounds or community patch to be full of wildlife and attractive to people? We offer advice based on years of experience, as well as workshops doing the practical work with you. Bespoke training days also offered. www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk

Young people shaping the State of Nature Report 2019

On 4th October, an historic and informative report titled 'State of Nature 2019' was published by more than

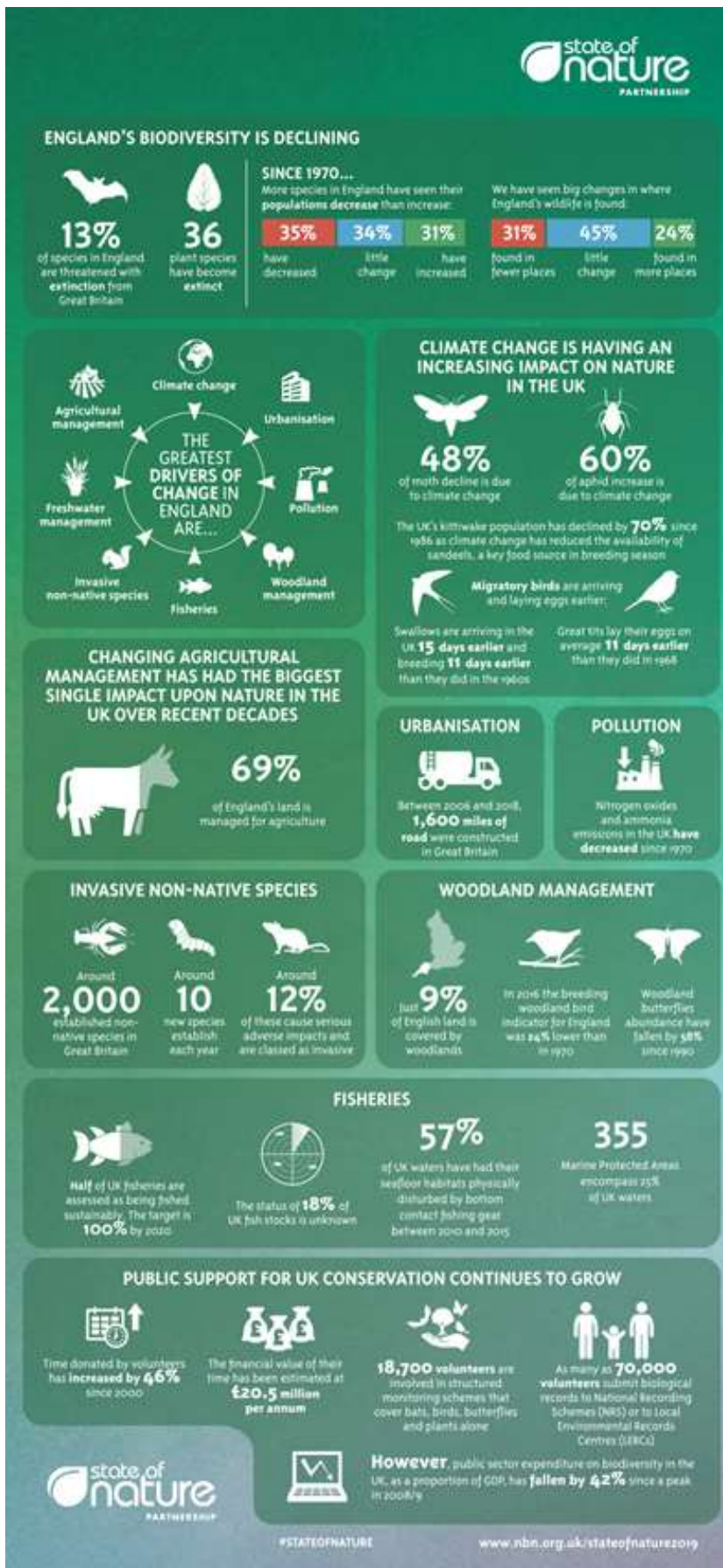
50 organisations. The report highlights how we have contributed to wildlife population trends in the UK. Most of the data used in the report are from citizen science projects, schemes which encourage the public to record what they see and submit it to conservation organisations.

This year, the report has been led by young conservationists, writing its foreword and presenting it. The report is the third of its kind, with one published every three years, and it focuses on how human impacts are affecting the UK's biodiversity.

I got involved in the report through the RSPB, which was a great honour. Twelve young conservationists were selected from across the country, and we all worked together on launching the report through social media, and writing the report's foreword, a compilation of quotations, on what nature means to each of us. It was fabulous to work with young people from all around the UK, and listen to their views on the natural world, whether it be how it benefits them in their daily lives, or the population trends of wildlife around them, which I found fascinating.

I found that the opportunity for young people to write the report's foreword was quite poignant, as it is the future of the next generation, and generations to come, which will ultimately be affected by the climate and ecological crises. It gives a picture on how essential nature and wildlife is to young people in the UK, and that it must be preserved, for our benefit.

When I read the report's findings, I was filled with shock and sadness, to see how brutally we have persecuted our wildlife through agricultural management and urbanisation, among other ways. I cannot imagine the UK without iconic species such as puffins and pine martens, and what saddened me even more



(State of Nature partnership)

was that in the urban environment, which I live in, species have declined by 47% since 1970: we are turning a blind eye to the wildlife we share our doorstep with.

After the report's release, the whole country, especially young people, should take action. You may feel that change is out of our hands, but we can start on our doorsteps. This could be as simple as hanging bird feeders and cleaning them regularly. You could create a pond out of a container, or plant wildflowers. You could even contact local developers, advising them to make their buildings sustainable, and volunteer on your local green space. Importantly, recording is key: keeping a count of the wildlife around you and submitting it to wildlife organisations helps to shape the next report.

The byproduct of all this is a coexistence between people and wildlife: an improved state of mind, sustainable living and better connections between communities.

Kabir Kaul

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Nature Friendly Schools project will benefit thousands of pupils

Having access to nature benefits children's mental health, their wellbeing and their ability to learn. This suggests that outdoor learning should be an important part of a child's education, yet despite mounting



(Debs Richardson)

evidence, time spent learning outdoors varies significantly in schools across England. While some schools are fully embracing outdoor learning opportunities, for other schools it is more difficult.

Learning outdoors, surrounded by nature can have a positive impact on long term memory, knowledge and understanding, educational attainment and behaviour [Kings College: 2011]. As little as one hour of outdoor learning each week can have huge benefits for both children and teachers [Swansea University: 2019].

A key commitment in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan is to encourage children to be close

to nature – especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. To help achieve this, £6.4 million of funding has been made available by the Department of Education through the Children and Nature Programme to deliver the Nature Friendly Schools project.

The project is being led by the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts together with partners including YoungMinds, Sensory Trust, Groundwork, Field Studies Council and Wildlife Trusts. Over the next three years, children at almost 400 primary, secondary, special and alternative provision schools in England with the highest proportion of disadvantaged pupils will be given the opportunity to spend up to two hours learning outside the classroom every week.

Nature Friendly Schools Project Manager, Beverley Gormley, explains: "Every child deserves the best opportunities when it comes to their education and this needs to include access to nature and learning outdoors. A significant barrier to outdoor learning appears to be a lack of teacher confidence in delivering

curriculum-based learning in an outdoor setting, which is why we are working with schools to provide teachers with the resources and skills they need to confidently deliver lessons outdoors."

An increasing number of studies, reports and surveys are showing not only a direct correlation between wellbeing and access to nature, but also a lack of access and connection to nature among children and young people.

Young people's connection to nature drops sharply at 11 and doesn't recover until they are 30 [University of Derby: 2019]. 83% of British children aged 5-16 can't identify a bumblebee [Hoop study: 2019]. 17% of youngsters aged 17-19 already have a mental health disorder [NHS survey: 2017].



(Helena Dolby)

Beverley adds: "Some schools are already blessed with green space, with parks and nature reserves on their doorstep and wildlife close by. For these schools, the opportunities to learn in nature are clear to see. In fact, some schools are already creating inviting outdoor areas to play and learn. But there is also an abundance of schools in built up areas with concrete playgrounds, situated several miles from a park or open green space. For these schools outdoor learning may seem like a daunting concept, maybe even unrealistic, but it doesn't need to be. There are inventive low maintenance solutions to incorporate nature into any school and make the most of the outdoor space they have to create an exciting and inspiring area for children to learn outside of the classroom."

By teaching outside the classroom, children are being taught that learning occurs everywhere and at all times – not just inside with a book and pen in hand.

The details

Nature Friendly Schools will work with schools to encourage the delivery of outdoor learning through a variety of interventions.

- Training and support

Training and practical support will be provided for teachers and school staff. This will include ideas for curriculum-linked outdoor lessons, activities and games, as well as advice on how to overcome the challenges of teaching outdoors and how to sustain it all year round, in all weather conditions.

- Greener school grounds

Low maintenance opportunities to 'green' school grounds will be identified, providing schools with the opportunity to create outdoor spaces with features such as wildflower patches, sensory gardens, and container beds/ponds to enable effective and creative outdoor learning to take place. These will be designed in collaboration with staff and pupils and will allow children to experience nature close-up - from beautiful butterflies to mini-beasts, and maybe even an encounter with a frog!



(Caroline Fitton)

- Off-site visits

Opportunities will be identified for pupils to take part in out of school activities to explore the range of green spaces they can access, increasing the topics that can be taught outdoors. Learning opportunities that are not possible on school grounds - such as residential visits, can also be explored.



(Groundwork)

These interventions will maximise the opportunities for teachers to facilitate outdoor learning, providing children with the opportunity to get closer to nature, fuelling creativity and a sense of adventure, allowing them to experience the joy that nature can bring. At the same time, they will help to develop teachers' confidence to embrace and drive forward outdoor learning in their own schools.

In its first year the project will work with nearly 100 schools in six areas in England - Birmingham, Devon, Essex, Lancashire, Shropshire and Yorkshire, rolling out to other areas in years two and three.

Lasting legacy

Nature Friendly Schools has the ambition to become a legacy project. Through the 'share, learn, improve' approach it is hoped that the skills and confidence gained by participating in the project will enable schools to embed outdoor learning into their timetable and share what they have learned with other schools.

The project will include an independent evaluation which can inform policy and influence decision makers on the benefits and practicalities involved with outdoor learning.

To find out more about Nature Friendly Schools visit www.naturefriendlyschools.co.uk or follow @NatureFSchools on Twitter

We think it is vital to give the next generation the opportunity to learn about dragonflies and their habitats. Dragonflies' ancient past, amazing adaptations and beautiful forms make them the ideal insects to introduce children to concepts such as invertebrate life, life cycles and habitats. Download our FREE resources: <https://c-js.co.uk/37zDG8r>



OASES, Outdoor & Active Learning: Do you want to use the outdoors to enhance pupil engagement and improve pupil well-being? OASES can work with your school to deliver Twilights, PD Days, accredited training and whole school transformation, to enable your pupils to reap the benefits of this proven pedagogy. Tel: 03000 260535 www.oasesnortheast.org.uk

Learning for a Healthy Future Conference, Utilising the Outdoors to Improve Achievement and Well-Being Dates: March 26th 2020 & June 11th 2020 Location: Beamish Hall Hotel, Beamish, Stanley, Durham, DH9 0YB Cost: £199/day. For more information & to book a place please visit <https://oasesnortheast.org.uk/events-promotions>

RHET deliver food and farming education to educational groups across Scotland. We offer farm visits, in school talks and cookery training to pupils and a range of professional development opportunities for teachers. Further information and our resource portal can be found at www.rhet.org.uk @therhet

Forest School training 2020 - Level 3 Leader and Level 2 Assistant in Suffolk/Norfolk led by our Forest School Association Endorsed tutor Mell Harrison. Spring, Summer and Autumn dates to suit all. Check out our website: <https://c-js.co.uk/2sfEdfE> 01284 830829 email: forestschool@greenlighttrust.org

Earthwatch Teach Earth: Immersive training providing the space to learn about and partake in citizen science projects, which you can use in school, setting them within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, helping educators and students to feel more confident in engaging with outdoor learning. Get in touch: education@earthwatch.org.uk

Green Schools Project helps students to play a role in tackling the climate crisis by enabling them to lead school-based projects that support the natural world. We have made our resources free for teachers to access if you register on our website: www.greenschoolsproject.org.uk and have additional support available.

NRW can help you realise the New Curriculum for Wales through Outdoor Learning. For free learning resources, training and much more visit naturalresources.wales/learning and prepare for #WalesOutdoorLearningWeek in March 2020. Contact education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

EUROPARC Youth Manifesto

A Call for Change in Rural Communities and Protected Areas



EUROPARC Youth Manifesto – 1st Workshop May 2018 in Cairngorms National Park (Glenmore Lodge Aviemore, Scotland) S Burger.

The EUROPARC Youth Manifesto is a source of ideas and inspiration for decision-makers in Protected Areas and rural communities to ensure the involvement and empowerment of young people.

Young people play an important role in looking after our Protected Areas: They are the decision-makers of tomorrow and they are capable of leading the way to a sustainable future for our parks if they are given the chance to have their say. It is vital that young people get involved in the governance of Protected Areas, so they can share their perspectives on the issues that will impact their future development and that of our natural and cultural heritage. And it is now that they can develop the skills it will take to manage resilient parks and build sustainable communities.

Across Europe, Protected Areas and rural communities face similar challenges: they struggle to engage meaningfully with younger generations. Young people and families are the future of rural places in Europe, and yet they are increasingly moving to more urban places, that promise good education, viable jobs, more diverse career opportunities, reliable infrastructure, tolerant mindsets and greater freedom for self-development. Young people leaving parks and rural areas means the next generation of teachers, politicians, rangers, doctors, managers, conservationists and farmers are moving away – the future stewards of our natural heritage, our cultural landscapes and the biodiversity they are home to.

A clear, consistent and coordinated approach to engaging young people meaningfully in protected areas and rural communities is needed - and this is where the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto comes in!



In 2018 around 40 young project participants, aged 16-25, from Scotland, England, Wales, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Japan, Italy, came together in two intense workshop weeks.

In May participants gathered in the Cairngorms National Park for the first workshop, that was all about experience sharing, ideating and eventually drafting the Manifesto. Besides all the thinking they got to spend some time in the outdoors of the Cairngorms and experienced a traditional céilidh.

The second project workshop in June took the youngsters even further up north, to Kalajoki, Finland. Youngsters gathered with some new faces joining the project to finalize the Manifesto, discuss youth governance, learn about designing youth projects and to start planning the final presentation of their work to delegates at the EUROPARC Conference.

The EUROPARC Youth Manifesto was launched in September 2018 at the EUROPARC Conference in the Cairngorms National Park. The youth participants were around for the whole event to spread the word about the Manifesto; sharing with delegates their perspectives on challenges and needs of youth in their rural and Protected Areas during field trips, lunches, dinners and coffee breaks.

However, the youngsters were not only there to talk. They had come with the mission to inspire real action – and to encourage others to get active, the best way stays: walk the talk and move yourself first! So, the night before the official Manifesto release, youngsters entered the stage and performed a short theatre and flashmob dance, inviting everyone to dance along!



Youth pitching their Manifesto to a full audience on the final day of the EUROPARC Conference 2018 in Cairngorms National Park. ©Konatsu Hagita

A symbolic moment, with a clear message: don't worry if you don't have the solutions or know the exact steps to take right from the start. Just join in, follow the youth and create your steps together with them!

Youngsters showed in a playful way, that they can contribute with the skills we need to create a sustainable future for our European Parks and rural communities together: creativity, joy, some courage – and fresh ideas. All we need to respond with is an open mind, curiosity to learn with the youth and trust that creating together is the way forward.

The presentation was a memorable experience, as every young Manifesto representative on stage shared examples from their personal lives or that of peers growing up in rural areas. Their clear message reached delegates. They rushed to receive a printed copy of the Youth Manifesto and discuss ideas with the young ambassadors after their presentation. First project ideas were discussed and some of the youngsters had the chance to work out concrete plans for follow-up action with delegates and authorities in their parks and communities once back home.

The EUROPARC Conference 2018 marked a promising starting point. Now we need to keep the momentum going!

Feel free to get in touch with us for questions and make sure you keep us posted about your ideas to implement the Youth Manifesto in your area: youth@europarc.org

We'd be thrilled to learn about projects inspired by the Manifesto, so we can connect and make them visible throughout our European network.

Let's take action for change and co-create sustainable Protected Areas and resilient communities together!

<https://cairngorms.co.uk/caring-future/education/youth-action/>

Adapted from web article written by Stefanie Burger for the EUROPARC Federation.

The EUROPARC Youth Manifesto was created as an output of a transnational LEADER project, led by the Cairngorms National Park Authority in collaboration with the three Finnish LEADER groups Rieska, Keskipiste, and Ravakka; the Cairngorms Local Action Group; Scottish Natural Heritage; Young Scot and the EUROPARC Federation. The project supported the Scottish Year of Young People 2018 and has continued into a second year.



One in 12 trustees are named either John or David. Fewer than 3% of trustees are under 30. It's no secret that board diversity is an issue. We are #YoungTrustees. We are building a movement and taking holistic action to combat this. Join us -> <http://youngtrusteesmovement.org/make-a-pledge/>

The Impact of Partnership: supporting people's engagement with nature

Each year, the John Muir Trust supports over 1,500 organisations across the UK to engage 40,000 people of all backgrounds to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places. It does this through the John Muir Award – a nationally recognised environmental award scheme.



Sarah McNeill, the John Muir Trust's John Muir Award Scotland Project Manager, reflects on the role of partnerships.

John Muir Trust and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park partnership

The reach of the John Muir Award would not be possible without our partners – from youth groups, adult and family workers and schools, to residential centres, local authorities and national parks.

In 2013, a mutually beneficial partnership was formed between the John Muir Trust and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park to support John Muir Award activity in and around the National Park. Its purpose is to promote environmental engagement and outdoor learning for all, and help deliver National Park Partnership Plan¹ outcomes across visitor experience, conservation & land management, and rural development.

The partnership places the John Muir Award at the heart of environmental engagement and outdoor learning schemes promoted by Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. It was chosen because the John Muir Award:

- is a flexible, practical and experience based learning scheme that can be used by a wide range of learners from inclusion groups to self-guided individuals
- encourages outdoor activity and links participants to first-hand experience of wildness and the natural environment
- increases people's understanding of the special qualities of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs and of John Muir (the 'founder' of National Parks)
- is a nationally recognised scheme that supports curriculum learning and pupil attainment
- is freely available and inclusive, to ensure disadvantage isn't a barrier to people experiencing wild places.

"It's fantastic to see the progress achieved through the partnership between Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park and The John Muir Trust since August 2013, and to see the benefits for both Award participants and for the environment in and around the National Park. We look forward to facilitating even more learning opportunities and experiences in the years to come."

Gordon Watson, Chief Executive Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park

National Park partnership outcomes

- Over 10,000 John Muir Awards achieved through outreach
- 25% achieved by people experiencing some form of disadvantage
- 130 partner organisations engaged with the National Park, including schools, outdoor centres, youth & community groups, employability groups, individuals and families
- 20 training opportunities supporting over 300 professionals and volunteers
- 4 good practice sharing events engaging over 70 participants
- 10 inspiring case studies and



John Muir Award in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park training course at Lochgoilhead Outdoor Centre
©Lucy Sparks

stories from schools, outdoor centres, youth groups, families, staff teams, individuals and volunteers

- 2 conserve audits summarising how John Muir Award activity helps care for Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
- 7 National Park staff team John Muir Awards for staff development
- 2 special interest courses, Dark Skies in National Parks and Literacy & Nature events



After attending training, Tulloch Youth Services and Knoxland Primary School took their literacy learning outside using The Lost Words book and Explorers Guide² as inspiration. Watch their creative creature raps and songs [here](#)³. ©Tulloch Youth Services

Young People and Nature

Inspired by Year of Young People 2018 in Scotland, and #iwill4nature across the UK, the partnership has also focused on young people's nature connection.

Nature connection research from the University of Derby⁴ recognises that early experiences in nature impact our relationship with it throughout our lives, which is not only beneficial for us, but for the planet too. This research urges outdoor practitioners to move beyond traditional routes of 'knowledge and identification' activities to those that enable people to develop more emotional and meaningful experiences in nature, through the pathways towards nature connectedness of contact, beauty, meaning, emotion and compassion.

This Nature Connectedness research acknowledges happiness, health and wellbeing benefits of closer relationships between people

and the natural world, and the long term influence this has on a person's pro-environmental behaviours.

"The evidence is clear; the well-being of future populations and the planet depends on closer, positive and sustainable human-nature relationships." Finding Nature, Professor Miles Richardson

The John Muir Award encourages people of all backgrounds to connect with wild places, enjoy them, and help care for them. Many in society have been inspired by the youth-led movement for change in response to our climate crisis, people all over the world are feeling empowered to speak up and take climate action. During a 2018 audit of John Muir Award Conserve activity in Scotland, an impressive 29,848 days of activity was recorded. These were carried out by 19,346 young people and valued at £783,500. One young Award participant reflected on their conservation experience saying "As we came to the end of the [John Muir Award] week I started to realise how much we need to appreciate what we have."

Additional outcomes

In 2018, the John Muir Trust commissioned a young film maker to direct, shoot and edit a series of films to



Oscar, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Youth Committee Member and Junior Ranger ©Martin MacLeod

help share what young people think about nature and the outdoors. The partnership with the National Park provided a good opportunity to focus one film on the voices of young people engaged through National Park Junior Ranger programmes. Oscar, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Youth Committee Member and Junior Ranger, reflected that when spending time outdoors "there's no stress, there's nothing really to be worried about, it lifts all your thoughts away". Watch Oscar's full film [here](#)⁵.

Looking forward...

Over the years, we've seen the partnership with Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park develop to meet changing national and local agendas – health & wellbeing, curriculum learning, biodiversity awareness, responsible access, nature connection, sustainability and climate emergency to name a few.

Key strategic partnerships such as this will continue to flex and respond to the organisational and national needs, helping ensure the relevance of developing people's nature connection, and involvement in caring for our natural environment.

Contact the John Muir Trust to find out what a partnership could look like for your organisation.
<https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/contact>

Find out more...

Partnership Impact Report:

Celebrating over five years of successful partnership working between Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park & John Muir Trust: <https://c-js.co.uk/2shVRiT>

John Muir Award dedicated

webpages:

<https://c-js.co.uk/2sh0auL>

<https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/john-muir-award>

John Muir Award Year of Young People 2018 Conserve Audit: A

summary of conservation activity carried out by young people to meet the Conserve Challenge of the John Muir Award throughout 2018: <https://c-js.co.uk/2rkLKJJ>



Hill of Beath Primary School Award Participants with Ardroy Outdoor Centre ©Ardroy OEC

Young People & Nature Webpages: Research and feedback, initiatives, and stories that highlight ways that young people can, and do, take practical action for nature: www.johnmuirtrust.org/youngpeople

Footnotes & Links

- 1 <https://c-js.co.uk/33c9A7C>
- 2 <https://c-js.co.uk/33hJHTO>
- 3 <https://c-js.co.uk/33mvRzr>
- 4 Lumber R, Richardson M, Sheffield D (2017) Beyond knowing nature: Contact, emotion, compassion, meaning, and beauty are pathways to nature connection. PLoS ONE 12(5): e0177186.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0177186>
- 5 <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/latest/young-people-and-nature-films>

Derwent Hill near Keswick has a number of Environmental Programmes available and has been offering John Muir Award Courses for many years. There has never been a more important time to ensure the next generation learn about these issues. Please visit: www.derwenthill.co.uk for details.

ReRoute

ReRoute is Scotland's Youth Biodiversity Panel and is made up of young people aged 13 to 24 from all backgrounds across Scotland. The panel members volunteer their time and work hard to increase young people's engagement with Scotland's biodiversity.



Since 2015, Young Scot and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) have been supporting ReRoute to talk to and engage young people on different topics, issues and opportunities related to Scotland's amazing nature and wildlife.

In 2016, ReRoute delivered their Young People and Nature: An Insight Report which represented the views and opinions of over 1,000 young people on their relationship with nature and Scotland's outdoors. The panel used this insight to produce the ReRoute Recommendations Report. This set out the recommendations that ReRoute co-created with SNH to improve young people's engagement with nature and the natural environment.

Some of the key recommendations are:

- Actively engage young people with Scotland's nature by allowing them to experience it and develop not only an interest but an investment in it both now and in the future.

- Ensure young people are invested in and involved in their local green spaces.
- Improve job and volunteering opportunities for young people.
- Use online communications and social media more effectively to engage young people.

The entire recommendations process engaged over 1,300 young people and the panel gave over 2,500 volunteering hours. From October 2018 to October 2019, the second group of ReRoute volunteers worked alongside staff to implement the recommendations outlined in the report. ReRoute also developed and administered the £20,000 Future Routes Fund which supported young people who had innovative ideas on how to help other young people to connect with nature and make a positive impact on the natural environment.

Panel member Oscar Fisher-Wingate, 15, from Stirlingshire, said: "ReRoute taught me about more than just being environmentally aware, but also about teamwork. It's been great to see how working together can get things done. Teamwork will give us the chance to change things for the future."

Full information on ReRoute can be found at www.young.scot/reroute



(Young Scot)

Inspire the younger generation to conserve one of our most iconic mammals! 'Water Voles' by Ruth Street is an information book for primary aged children describing where they live, how they survive, why they are endangered and what is being done to help them. Fully illustrated throughout with the authors own photos. £4.99 available from Street Country www.street-country.com

Junior Award Scheme for Schools (JASS) is an accredited award scheme that acknowledges wider achievement for young people aged 5-14. Conservation and the environment fits perfectly with all four sections. For more information on JASS, contact joan@jassschools.org.uk or visit our website at jassschools.org.uk

Edible Playgrounds transform school grounds into vibrant outdoor teaching gardens that inspire hands-on learning and get children excited about growing and eating healthy food. treesforcities.org
info@treesforcities.org

Are you interested in improving your skills by learning how to identify a particular group of plants or animals? BRISC works with other organisations to fund field studies courses, with a contribution of up to £200. We welcome applications from anyone in Scotland. For more information visit www.brisco.org.uk

Why pay for expensive outdoor providers to come into your school when for a fraction of the cost you can get your own staff trained to become confident, skilled outdoor leaders. Training is accredited by the NCFE and can be completed in just 7 days. Visit <https://c-js.co.uk/37yvsgM> for more details.

Dartmoor National Park uses a 'progression route' to engage young people. This starts with children in a family learning club catering for 5 – 12 year olds. For 12 – 15 year olds we provide 'Junior Rangers'. Junior Rangers undertake a range of practical conservation tasks combined with outdoor learning. <https://c-js.co.uk/2QNVjel>

Muddy Faces provides high quality resources supporting Forest School, outdoor play and learning. We specialise in and have a big range of UK grown wood products. Our passion for getting outdoors has led to the development of our Outdoor Hub full of free activity ideas and information. www.muddyfaces.co.uk

Wild Learning is a Midlands based company offering Forest School Leader and Assistant Training, as well as accredited training in Outdoor Learning Practise. Along with supporting existing Forest Schools and Outdoor Learning set-ups with a variety of Continuous Professional Development courses and consultancy. Please visit our website; www.wild-learning.com for details.

NOCN Level 3 Certificate for Forest School Leaders.
10 day course: March 2020 – November 2020.
Location: EWE, Esh Winning, Durham & Hamsterley Forest, Course fee: £850.
Email: bookings@oasesnortheast.org.uk
Telephone: 03000 260 535 www.oasesnortheast.org.uk

Forest School Training with The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. We are delivering in 2020 a Level 2 Award for Forest School Assistants and the Level 3 Certificate for Forest School Leaders. Please visit our website for more information and how to book www.hiwwt.org.uk or email forestschool@hiwwt.org.uk

Grants are available for the study of non-flowering plants and algae, fungi and lichens as well as flowering plants. Support for Student Fieldwork is available for both Fieldwork Projects (up to £400) and for individual students (up to £200). Further information can be found at: <https://c-js.co.uk/37D7uRp>

Discovering nature; environmental education in 2019



For much of the year, my work for BCP Council involves leading environmental education at



Emily helping a family to identify creatures found whilst pond dipping at Hengistbury Head Nature Reserve (BCP Council)

Hengistbury Head Nature Reserve in Dorset. The Local Nature Reserve and SSSI offers outdoor sessions tying together the national curriculum and the natural world. We provide opportunities to both schools and family groups, with over 2000 children attending sessions in 2019.

Working with the reserve's Rangers I developed an education offer that seeks to encourage young people outdoors in an age where children in the UK spend an average of 7 hours outside each week. The introduction of a new learning environment, especially when it is raining, is often met with trepidation from children and adults. Luckily, the draw of a muddy puddle to splash in is impossible to resist for almost every student who visits the reserve and that initial hesitance is soon forgotten.

In May 2019, we delivered the Great Wildlife Exploration event within King's Park, Boscombe - an urban green space located in an area classed in the top 5th for deprivation in the UK. Of the hundreds who attended the event, many were local residents who had no idea of the nature potential on their doorstep. Members of the public attended activities led by experts in their field and the event was filled with many nature 'firsts'. A stand-out for me being one 7-year old bird walk attendee exclaiming that this was the first magpie he had (knowingly) seen.

By providing opportunities to learn outdoors and have these nature 'firsts', I hope environmental education can encourage

children to have a positive relationship with nature as the next generation of conservationists and countryside ambassadors.

Emily Fergusson, Leave Only Footprints Engagement Coordinator for BCP Council

During last summer, I was fortunate enough to be employed into a short-term summer project focused on outdoor learning. This project was run by Dorset Rewilding, with support from Poole Council and Public Health Dorset. The aim of this project was to provide free, outdoor events on local public greenspaces in deprived communities. The focus was on children up to 13 years, but with the main aim to get whole families involved. The sessions I ran looked at nature arts and crafts, creation of bird feeders, den-making, paediatric first aid and many more. Focus was on the children, however, one of the aims of the



A young family learn how to make bird feeders at a Get Out and Play event (Mollie Taylor)

project was to provide parents/guardians with free ideas they could replicate with the children themselves. This would result in more time outdoors, being active, and less time indoors, looking at screens. This project was highly rewarding, not only to introduce the children to different aspects of nature and the outdoors, but also to see a community coming together; with a group forming, who would meet up outside of the organised sessions. I believe inspiring the next generation with a passion for nature and the environment is essential to ensure they care for their environment throughout their lives; and that this should involve the whole family, as who do children look up to more than their own parents?

Mollie Taylor, Placement Ranger for BCP Council

Find out more about Hengistbury Head at <https://www.visithengistburyhead.co.uk/Home.aspx>

Campaign to get children across the UK spending a million more hours in nature



Backyard Nature is giving children and young people the tools they need to enjoy and protect nature where they live. Launched in July, the campaign is a response to the UK's growing nature crisis, with a massive 40% of the nation's species in steep decline.



Backyard Nature pledges to inspire one million hours in the outdoors for children and encourages them to act as 'nature guardians' (Backyard Nature)

At the same time, children are spending less time enjoying nature. Research released by the campaign partners found that 60% of children want to spend more time outside, but 62% currently spend less than five hours per week outdoors, not including travelling to school. Over four fifths (82%) of UK parents say that they are fearful about the future environmental challenges facing the next generation. Spending time in nature helps children get to know and love it, which is critical if they are to grow into the future guardians of the planet.

Young people and their grown-ups, can sign-up on the website to become a Backyard Nature Guardian. Once joined, they identify their patch, which could be a plant pot, an area of their

garden or a local green space. They then use the free resources to help them protect their patch while also telling the world what they are doing to inspire others to get involved. Nearly 4,000 Backyard Nature Guardians have signed up so far! As well as doing their own thing to help nature thrive, they have helped to plant over 15 million wildflower seeds as part of the campaign's Save the Bees mission!

Backyard Nature was inspired by the Eco Emeralds, a group of young environmentalists from All Saints Catholic Primary School in Liverpool. They contacted Iceland's managing director Richard Walker via Twitter and were invited to the supermarket firm's head office to present their ideas, which led to the development of the campaign.

Richard said: "The nation is waking up to the immediate challenge facing us - far bigger than any of the other issues being discussed in the media at the moment, the environmental crisis has huge implications for us all. The Eco Emeralds share my belief that the next generation needs to connect with nature and become conservation activists, and their commitment to motivating and enabling others to do this is truly inspiring. By encouraging children to spend one million hours in their backyards, the campaign is committed to truly connecting the next generation with the planet we all need their help to save."

Backyard Nature is led by Semble, the UK's leading organisation for grassroots community projects. It is funded by the Iceland Foods Charitable Foundation and supported by a collective of charity partners, including the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Plantlife and The Wildlife Trusts.



The Backyard Nature website features resources and events to help children learn about and protect nature (Backyard Nature)

Semble, previously known as Project Dirt, helps small and local community projects get the support they deserve. Semble runs a range of inspiring campaigns that support people and businesses to take local action in their communities. Community projects use the Semble.org platform to share their stories and find resources to grow their impact.

To find out more visit backyardnature.org or email backyardnature@semble.org

What is Young Placechangers?

By Ea O'Neill, greenspace scotland Programme Manager

Young people are almost invisible in the Public Realm and are a missing voice in local place consultations. They are frequently described as a 'problem' by the wider community and the answer to the perceived threat of young people 'hanging around' is too often to restrict their access.



Young Placechangers at Glasgow University (GUEST)
(greenspace scotland)

The programme empowers young people to take the lead in changing places where they live. The residential training weekends, bespoke training sessions and support from the Young Placechangers team are designed to give the young people and the adults that support them the skills and confidence to change the places where they live for the better.

We are working with youth groups, scouts, a creative media charity, a school and wider community groups. Some of the groups have focused on the outdoor space near their meeting place, others have arranged events in local greenspaces and parks

talking to people about which improvements they'd like to see happen.

The Young Placechangers programme combines greenspace scotland's experience of working with community groups on placemaking with Youth Scotland's experience of youth work and supporting young people to take the lead. We have funding from Scottish Government, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Gannochy Trust to support the programme until June 2020.

Why Young Placechangers?

It puts young people in the lead role – bringing together the wider community to look at local spaces and to plan improvements.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and new Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 bring a strong focus on Local Place Plans and on communities taking the lead on delivery of services and ownership of assets. The Scottish Government and CoSLA (The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) have also recently agreed to adopt the Place Principle to encourage better collaboration and community involvement. This makes it more important than ever that young people feel they can play an equal part in these collaborations and discussions.



YPC training: place evaluation (greenspace scotland)

How does it work?

The Young Placechangers programme has three core elements:

1. Young people and youth workers are given training in both residential settings and in local clusters. They are introduced to tools/approaches such as the Place Standard, Community Placemaking and creative consultation techniques.
2. The Ideas Fund supports activity and delivers quick-win projects. Following on from training sessions the groups can apply grants to take forward a place changing project.
3. Peers and 'place professionals' inspire and support along the placemaking journey.

What do young people get out of it?

“As soon as I got back from the residential, I started working on the plans we had made. The residential gave me the motivation to get it done—we put a budget together and we got in contact with people that could help us change our space. This made me feel more involved and more included in the process of changing the area and it's nice to know that I have helped to make the change”.



YPC training: community mapping (greenspace scotland)

Through the quick-win projects the young people find out that they can have an impact on their local area, it makes them feel proud and they want to do more.

We also ensure that every young person who takes part in the programme can complete a Dynamic Youth Award or a Youth Achievement Award at the appropriate level. Both awards are quality assured by Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and credit rated on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

How does the wider community benefit?

Attitudes to young people in their local communities improve and older people see for themselves that young people have a lot to offer. This change of mindset means that communities will be stronger and better connected. It also helps to develop a shared understanding and appreciation of the heritage of a place and this informs and enhances plans for the future.

“Members of the public walked past and gave us so many compliments and told us how much of a good job we were doing. We also had a few people stop that had tried to do our project in the past but were not successful, so they were very pleased to see that we were successful”.

What have we learned from the project so far?

- Young people are not the “citizens of the future”, they are citizens here and now and have a lot to offer when it comes to developing our local places.
- Young people use parks, public spaces and transport more than adults and are very aware of the needs of others and barriers faced, by for example disabled friends.
- Small-scale quick-win projects are important to garner interest and build confidence. The Community Placemaking approach has as one of its principles to “start with petunias” and this is even more important for young people.
- Meet young people where they are – in youth clubs, community centres and schools; they must choose to want to work on a place project.
- You must catch their interest and make it important enough for them to get involved. There's a lot of competition for young people's time these days.



YPC Heart & Sound, Dunfermline – celebrating achievement (greenspace scotland)

It's not just about “young people projects”. Our Young Placechangers have an idea of what they would like to do in their place, and through the programme we help them engage with the wider neighbourhood to share and shape their ideas. They end up leading on a community project bringing other local people, of all ages, with them.



Find out more: Young Placechangers website:
<https://www.greenspacescotland.org.uk/Pages/Category/young-people> or email info@greenspacescotland.org.uk



Scottish Government
 Riaghaltas na h-Alba
 gov.scot

Garnock Connections is encouraging people to connect with their local heritage, both cultural and natural. We have a wealth of wildlife recording equipment that schools within the project area can borrow for free. This includes binoculars, bat detectors, identification guides and more. Email garnock.connections@rspb.org.uk or call 07595 655174 for more information.

Resources for park maintenance are declining and more work is falling to “Friends of parks” groups; but volunteers represent a narrow, often older, demographic. The National Lottery Heritage Funded “Future Proof Parks” programme supports Friends groups and local young people to work together on heritage projects - expanding and diversifying green space volunteering and growing the next generation of volunteers.

Sign up for email updates on this innovative project run by Groundwork, Fields in Trust and the NYA at www.fieldsintrust.org/future-proof-parks



A 15 Year-old's Conservation Journey so far!

The beginning

My passion for wildlife started as a toddler, with my family encouraging me to explore nature: I loved countryside walks and looking for things like owl pellets, caterpillars and frog spawn. I learn best by 'doing' and that's very much how I've developed over the years.

Growing the passion

Several 'life events' were crucial in developing my conservation interests.

Building a Pond

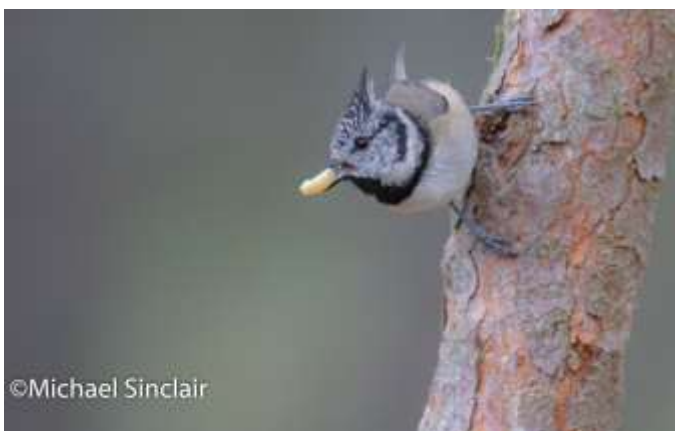
In 2012 I helped my dad build a garden pond. As it matured, frogs appeared and every spring my parent's kitchen was overrun with plastic tubs which we used to hatch the spawn, before releasing the tadpoles back into the pond!

Getting a Camera

Aged 11 I got a camera as a birthday present. It was brilliant! I could now go out and take pictures of wildlife. The following year I entered a few pictures into the Young Persons Category of the British Wildlife Photography Awards and to my amazement, although I didn't win, one of my photos was selected for publication. Wow! My passion for photography was sealed.



Endoscope in use by Roderick Morrison (left) and Michael Sinclair (right) (Kevin Sinclair)



Crested Tit

Scottish Bird Fair

Until 2016 there was an annual Scottish Bird Fair. I was already fascinated by birds and had become pretty obsessive learning about them and going birding with my Dad. Bird Fair gave me the chance to see Bird Ringing Demonstrations and go on guided bird walks/nest finding walks. However, one of the biggest things that happened was that the staff from BTO Scotland took time to encourage me and give me the confidence to carry on birding, despite not knowing any young birders/naturalists in Scotland.

BTO Bird Camp: a whole new world!!

Although I loved wildlife, my passion wasn't really shared by others my age where I lived. I wasn't a loner and had plenty of friends and did everything that young kids did: but, I preferred wildlife!

When I heard about the BTO Bird Camp (sponsored by the Cameron Bepolka Trust) it sounded great: a 3 day outdoor camp in late May with like-minded people in my age group 12 -18 held in Norfolk/Suffolk. I applied in 2017 and got notified that I was in. I was excited and really, really nervous at the same time. I'd set up my website about six months earlier and had also been active on Twitter so had got to know some of the Young Naturalists who I would now have the chance to meet for the first time.

I needn't have worried. Camp was brilliant. I met loads of people my age, had a laugh and realised there were other people like me who shared my interests.

Thanks to social media, after I left camp, I suddenly had a growing network of like-minded friends to keep in touch with.

Suddenly, my life was buzzing with Twitter posts about bird sightings, other trips and general chat. I'd found my place and I've returned to Bird Camp every year since!



Scarlet Elf Cup Fungi

Website and Blogging

I set up my website (www.mikesnature.com) in late 2016 to showcase my photography and to blog about my trips. I loved sharing what I was doing and hearing about what others were up to. Suddenly, the world was shrinking I wasn't on my own ... I was part of a community ... and I liked it!

My 100 Nestbox Challenge

In October 2017 I launched my 100 Nestbox Challenge: a project to build and sell 100 boxes myself (from scratch) to raise funds for three wildlife organisations. By February 2018 I'd sold my 100th box and raised a total of £1045 which was split between the RSPB, British Trust for Ornithology and Scottish Wildlife Trust.

Social media was crucial to promoting this project and I simply didn't anticipate the massive level of interest the project would generate with demands for boxes continuing to flood in well after the official project had ended.

I've continued to make boxes, but now focus on making these for my local park/nature reserve (Linn Park in Glasgow) where sponsorship from locals and funding from the RSPB has resulted in over 60 bird boxes and 20 bat boxes now being put up.

Community Volunteering (Friends of Linn Park)

Since 2017 I've been a volunteer with Friends of Linn Park, a community-based organisation which works closely with the Countryside Ranger to carry out environmental park improvements.

Over the years and with the support of the volunteers I've developed from participating in the different activities to taking a leading role in many.

I now coordinate an annual nestbox monitoring programme with a team of 10 nestbox monitors trained to inspect them in accordance with the BTO Nest Monitoring Guidelines. I'm responsible for submitting the annual data returns to the BTO.



© Michael Sinclair
Common Kingfisher

I also lead bat-walks in the park and run community nestbox-building events where the public can assemble nestboxes which I've pre-cut.

Benefits and Profile

In the last year I've been appointed to a number of Youth Ambassadorial roles as well as receiving several nominations and awards. I'm currently an Ambassador for the Cameron Bepolka Trust and Scotland: the Big Picture. I've also received a local Council Award for Outstanding Achievement for my local volunteering work, was runner-up in the Young Person of the Year Category in the Clarkston Community Awards (from over 100 nominees). In 2019 I've also been shortlisted for

two National Awards connected to wildlife and have recently been featured in The Herald and Evening Times newspapers detailing my volunteering and climate campaigning.

I'm regularly invited to attend and speak at events and was honoured to make a short speech with 6 other Climate Campaigners at the end of Chris Packham's talk at Birdfair 2019.

None of the above would have been possible without the encouragement of the conservation community and the willingness of adults/organisations to 'listen to a kid'.

The Future

I'm still not decided on where my future lies, but I'm leaning towards ranger-related work as I love the outdoors and the practical side of conservation. I think it's critical that youth is given a higher profile in environmental/conservation matters and hope that the momentum that has built up around the climate protests will be the start of that.

Mammal Mapper is a free app that has been designed to enable you to record signs and sightings of mammals in the UK. Mammals can be recorded along a route or as one-off sightings. Each time you upload a record you're helping with mammal conservation! Download the app here www.mammal.org.uk/volunteering/mammal-mapper/



The Youth Adventure Trust is a registered charity working with vulnerable young people aged 11 to 16 years old. Our outdoor adventure based programme enables young people to challenge themselves, learn to go beyond their own expectations and grow in confidence. Through a series of residential camps and day activities they build resilience, self esteem and develop social and life skills.

We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to support young people get the most out of their camp experiences. You will take part in all the activities alongside the young people, encouraging and supporting them, overseeing their welfare and guiding them to work together. Activities are all delivered by qualified instructors. Volunteers must be over 21yrs old. An enhanced DBS check and references will be required. Previous experience of outdoor activities and working with

young people are useful, but not essential.

We also need volunteers to support our fundraising challenge events. These events, from climbing mountains to endurance events, raise essential funds for the charity. Volunteers support staff with a range of tasks, including team registration, marshalling and offering support and encouragement to those taking part.

For further information contact jon@youthadventuretrust.org.uk, visit www.youthadventuretrust.org.uk or call 07469 886523.



The Welsh Mountain Zoo has a purpose-built education centre to provide engaging and educational sessions. We create tailor-made sessions, delivered in the zoo or the community. We allow children to get up close with a range of different species to evoke a sense of stewardship for the natural world.

www.welshmountainzoo.org
info@welshmountainzoo.org 01492 532938

CAT is an educational charity dedicated to researching and communicating positive solutions for environmental change. Gain new skills on one of our short courses, study with us for an environmental Masters degree or bring your university or school group to explore the importance of action on climate change. www.cat.org.uk

Our 3 centres in Hampshire and 1 in south Wales believe in the amazing benefits of getting everybody outside and being active. With 3 of our 4 centres in or around National Parks, there is plenty of wonderful scenery and nature to enjoy. Joe Cossey
bookings.hoc@hants.gov.uk
www.hants.gov.uk/outdoors

Skern Lodge is an outdoor education and activity provider based on the North Coast of sunny Devon. We invite thousands of school children, college students, apprentices, business managers, and families to our residential centre all year round to enjoy diverse, tailored, and bespoke development courses and programmes. www.skernlodge.co.uk – 01237 475992 – skern@skernlodge.co.uk

Independent education provider and beach shop at Rest Bay, Porthcawl connecting kids (and the grown ups that live and work with them) to their coast and blue planet through environmental education and ocean literacy beach-based lessons, activities and events. Outdoors. Year round. www.beachacademywales.com

Based at Daws Hall Nature Reserve is a 25-acre wildlife haven on the Essex-Suffolk border dedicated to environmental education: supporting curricular subjects and personal development through EYFS and all the Key Stages, providing analytical field studies at A-level, and inspiring those with a lifelong interest in nature. www.dawshallnature.co.uk
education@dawshallnature.co.uk

The Cameron Bepolka Trust - Bringing children and nature together.



Bringing children and nature together

Our Aims.....

The Cameron Bepolka Trust was set up in memory of Cameron.

He loved nature. He photographed it, blogged about it, surveyed it and immersed himself in it. Bird-watching was a major part of his life. We create and sponsor outdoor events for young people from every background to help them discover that same passion for all things wild and natural.

What an opportunity for our charity to reach out to young people at a time when we are all facing challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and a trend towards increased urban living. Suggestions have been made that overnight "....a night under the stars"school trips would help pupils understand more about the natural environment.



BTO Bird Camp (Rob Read)

The projects we support give young people hands-on opportunities to experience nature close up. We particularly try to reach those children who would not necessarily have the chance to experience and participate in outdoor activities.

We are proud to partner with a wide range of organisations who are actively involved in protecting and promoting the natural world. These partnerships are important in ensuring that the work we do is relevant and valuable.

What We Do

We fund a broad range of year-round activities for children and young people, both in the UK and USA. We are passionate about getting them outside and closer to nature.

The projects we sponsor are diverse and general to outdoor learning, involving practical skills, encouraging enthusiastic artists as well as teaching a love of the natural world through observation and understanding. We offer a variety of opportunities to inspire different levels of participation from young people, ranging from those new to nature to those seeking a career in conservation.

Examples include:

- Wildlife and bird camps run by expert partners such as the RSPB and HIWWT
- Scholarships and internships
- Wildlife talks
- Wildlife art competitions
- Bird and wildlife photography competitions
- Young Naturalist Group
- Cameron's Cottage (see below)
- We also organise many fundraising events to support our work.

Cameron's Cottage

Cameron's Cottage will be an exciting new facility hidden away in the middle of the RSPB's 1000 acre reserve, "Franchises Lodge" deep in the New Forest National Park.

We believe it is crucial to encourage young people to look after nature and help them develop a broader understanding of our ecosystem. When Cameron was 15, he spent 3 nights in a cottage in a nature reserve. Night and day, dawn and dusk, he was surrounded by the sights and sounds of nature. His stay in that cottage helped to fire his passion for wildlife observation - it was an experience he spoke of frequently, and was central to the naturalist he became.



Cameron's Cottage (Corinne Cruickshank)

Through our partnership with the RSPB we are planning to renovate and build on an existing cottage within Franchises Lodge. Partnerships like this are vital for the future of our fragile world and how fortunate we are to have such a wealth of experience from so many committed and knowledgeable individuals and

organisations. The cottage will provide a focus for many nature-based activities for groups from schools, colleges, universities and other organisations to encourage a life-long love of nature and the environment.

Sarah Neish Trustee of The Cameron Bepolka Trust
 web: www.cameronbepolka.com
 email: info@cameronbepolka.com
 mobile: +44 (0)7810 276411
 St. Giles House, St. Giles Hill, Winchester SO23 0HH
 Registered Charity No. 1156567



Brilliant opportunities are available for Young People to get active and engaged in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park including the Young volunteer programme for 16 – 25, Junior Ranger Programme for 11-18 and the National Park Youth Committee for 11 – 25 year olds. Contact education@lochlomond-trossachs.org for info.

Involving young people in governance

Anna Maggs, Communications Officer at Our Bright Future
www.ourbrightfuture.co.uk



Did you know that 18-24 year olds make up less than 0.5% of all charity Trustees¹, and the average age of a Trustee in England and Wales is 59 years old²? Despite efforts being made, the charity sector still has a long way to go! There is clearly appetite for the role, with a survey of under 35 year olds reporting that 85% would consider becoming a Trustee³.

Evidently there are young people who are interested in the role, so there clearly are barriers preventing young people from getting involved. Here at Our Bright Future, we are trying to remove some of them.

Our Bright Future is a partnership programme led by The Wildlife Trusts which brings together the youth and environmental sectors. This £33 million programme is funded by National Lottery Community Fund and is formed of 31 projects which help 11-24 year olds gain skills to equip them to be the environmental leaders of tomorrow. Today these young people are already delivering change in their communities and for the environment.



Ellie Brown, young Board Member

One of the main drivers of Our Bright Future is its dedication to youth empowerment. We have some great success stories and examples of young people being involved in governance. Ellie Brown (pictured) is a young Board Member at Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust⁴ (YDMT), who first became involved through its Our Bright Future project: Green Futures⁵. She explains how having a young person involved in governance can benefit an organisation:

'I think having a young person on a Board of Trustees can be a very positive thing for an organisation. In my experience a young person can quite often have very different ideas about things compared to more a senior Trustee; they see different priorities, and

perhaps have fresh ideas about how things should be done, thus shaking up the way things have always been done. This doesn't cause conflict, but instead promotes useful and interesting discussions. One YDMT Trustee has stated that having a young person on the Board has been 'a breath of fresh air'.

Jacob Lawson is shadowing the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust⁶ Board; he first became involved in the organisation through its Our Bright Future project: Tomorrow's Natural Leaders⁷. He explains why he wanted the opportunity to join Board meetings and the benefits an opportunity like this can have for a young person:

'I was interested in joining the Board meetings to really see how a large conservation organisation works at the highest level, see how this information filters down to the rest of the organisation and really get to grips with how decisions are



Our Bright Future Youth Forum member speaking in Parliament

made. I also felt that this would be a good experience to take forward in terms of my employability'

But it's not just through the role of young Trustees that young people can influence organisational governance. Campaigns are a key opportunity to incorporate a youth-led approach. The Our Bright Future campaign was determined by young people. More than 300 young people to answer the question; 'If you could change one thing for you and the environment, what would this be?' These were grouped and organised to create the following Three Asks:

- 1 more time spent learning in and about nature
- 2 support to get into environmental jobs
- 3 Government, employers, businesses, schools and charities to pay more attention to the needs of young people and the environment.

Ask 3 shows a hunger to be heard. Our Bright Future has put several mechanisms in place to involve young people in designing and delivering the programme, including youth representatives on the Steering Group and Evaluation Panel, and a Youth Forum which helped to create the Three Asks. These mechanisms are a win-win both for young people and the organisations involved.

'Traditionally conservation charities are not that diverse and it's really allowing us to be a bit more reflective; for example, our Board of Trustees has invited two reps from the project onto the Board to give the view of young people'

Project Manager



Our Bright Future Youth Forum members campaigning

'[I've] definitely grown exponentially in confidence...it's quite unusual for someone as young as we are to be given all these papers and read them and analyse them and think of the impact they'll have. [I]can't think of anything else in my life where I've been given the same opportunity.'

Youth Representative

Youth involvement in governance is gaining momentum across the Our Bright Future partnership:

- Impact Arts⁸ has invited young people to sit on its Steering Group
- Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust has established a Youth Forum and a Young Trustee role
- Avon⁹ and Gloucestershire¹⁰ Wildlife Trusts have established a Youth Forum
- Lancashire Wildlife Trust¹¹ has established a Youth Council
- The Wildlife Trusts included a Youth Panel as part of its CEO recruitment process

Giving young people a voice is helping them to realise that they deserve to be heard. Skills, knowledge and confidence are an important contributor to empowerment, a pre-requisite to young people taking further action. This is vital for Our Bright Future, given that a programme aim is to create the environmental leaders of the future.



Our Bright Future Youth Forum member presenting at Centre for Sustainable Energy 40th Anniversary Conference

Ultimately, a Board of Trustees should represent the beneficiaries of an organisation or programme. If your organisation works with young people, then young people should be included in the Board of Trustees.

Footnotes & Links

- 1 CAF (Charities Aid Foundation), 'Mind the Gap', 2012
- 2 <http://trusteesweek.org/>
- 3 <https://www.pilotlight.org.uk/blog/whats-the-benefit-of-young-trustees>
- 4 <https://www.ydmt.org/>
- 5 <http://www.ourbrightfuture.co.uk/projects/green-futures/>
- 6 <https://www.ywt.org.uk/>
- 7 <http://www.ourbrightfuture.co.uk/projects/tomorrows-natural-leaders/>
- 8 <https://www.impactarts.co.uk/>
- 9 <https://www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk/>
- 10 <https://www.gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk/>
- 11 <https://www.lancswt.org.uk/>



Let's Learn Moor, building partnerships through education in the uplands

The Let's Learn Moor initiative arose from concerns that a gap within our education system could give rise to a simple lack of understanding of those who live, work and enjoy our beautiful uplands. The history and importance of some of Britain's most stunning and iconic landscapes, is being slowly lost.

Many people living within upland communities across the country, often have no relationship with their moorland or the people helping to protect it. It can be seen as an open expanse viewed from afar or occasionally driven through. So the aims of Let's Learn Moor were very simple: to provide a free education experience for children to access moorland, then learn about the habitats and species from the people and organisations who manage and protect it. For people to make balanced decisions about conservation, rural communities and landscapes they need to hear from all the key people involved, and this includes the shooting community.



(Gareth Dockerty)

The ban driven grouse shooting agenda has often sought to polarise the arguments and create a very simplistic "us and them" stance. However, Let's Learn Moor shows that often organisations have the same aims and that protection of habitats and species is at the top of all their agendas. A water utility company, the police, fire brigade, gamekeepers, farmers or a bird watching club all have differing priorities, but open communication and dialogue is the key, and our future decision makers will only make good decisions by understanding a balanced picture.

Let's Learn Moor was kick-started in 2017 with the North York Moors Moorland Organisation plus a North Yorkshire Police grant and BASC legacy funding on a grouse moor in the North York Moors National Park, involving a broad selection of partner organisations from day one.



(Gareth Dockerty)

Building on the success of the first two years, our third instalment (July 2019) saw over 1,400 schoolchildren head onto the moors to enjoy a full day of practical and fun education. Events took place simultaneously across seven locations including the North York Moors, Nidderdale, Lancashire, Peak District, Yorkshire Dales, Northumberland and Cumbria.

Let's Learn Moor has come a long way in three years and is now a truly engaging project featuring over 30 partner organisations from gamekeepers and

farmers, to National Park and AONB authorities, conservation organisations and emergency services, plus key stakeholders like Yorkshire Water. The weeklong celebration in June saw children enjoy practical lessons in fire safety and mountain rescue, learn about the history of farming and gamekeeping in these remote areas, and enjoy the iconic flora and fauna inhabiting them.

The week was full of highlights but the moments that stood out the most were...

- Observing a gamekeeper call over a grouse hen with her 5 chicks as the children watched on in amazement, this was preceded by a golden plover darting past the group, then finished off with a lapwing calling loudly overhead.
- Speaking to local teachers who said they had never visited the moorland on their doorstep and had been inspired by the day to take the moor back into the class room to engage the children across multiple subjects.
- Listening to Yorkshire Water explain to children that a healthy moor needs to balance the needs of water companies, conservation, the shooting community, farmers, forestry and visitors and it will be the children's job to find the balance in the future years.



(Gareth Dockerty)

Our uplands are an asset and vital for so much of our lives that go on further down the valley. It is the primary aim of Let's Learn Moor to ensure that their importance is not forgotten.

The week was a massive logistical operation, but one that paid dividends once you saw the size of the children's smiles. The event could not have taken place without the coordination of the regional moorland groups, who organised each event, and did an amazing job at each venue.

My thanks go out to all the groups for giving up their time to ensure the next generation has an improved connection to the uplands.



(Gareth Dockerty)

Where do we go from here?

Having secured nearly £50k of funding for the next three years, the plan is to continue to grow Let's Learn Moor, enabling events to be undertaken in the uplands of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. We have challenged ourselves to involve over 3,000 children in 2020 with a minimum of 13 events in one week commencing 29th June 2020.

If you would like more information on

Let's Learn Moor or would like to get involved in the project please contact gareth.dockerty@basc.org.uk

Partnership programme, Our Bright Future, which is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and brings together the youth and environmental sectors, is in the midst of a three-prong campaign. Last year 300 young people answered the question 'If you could change one thing for you and the environment, what would this be?' The three campaign asks have been born out of these answers:

Ask 1: more time learning in and about nature

Ask 2: support to get into environmental jobs

Ask 3: Government, employers, businesses, schools and charities to pay more attention to the needs of young people and the environment

This autumn Our Bright Future has been focusing on Ask 1 and calling for Government to produce guidance to schools stating that at least an hour of lesson time per day should be spent outdoors. On Outdoor Classroom Day (7 November) schools and young people across the UK took part in an hour of outdoor activity. The day highlighted that being connected to nature improves physical health, wellbeing and learning in young people. Keep up to date with the Our Bright Future campaign at <http://www.ourbrightfuture.co.uk/campaign/>



Wild futures

Picturing a future to look forward to

Our landscape – what's there to think about?

How we live and form links to nature is irreversibly and historically tied with the landscape. The role that nature has in our day-to-day lives has been altered by world events, cultural shifts and urbanisation, with each subsequent generation defining wilderness and 'nature' based on the memories tied to their youth. This 'shifting baseline syndrome' means that each generation comes to expect different things of the countryside, influenced by what we have seen in our lifetime, stories from our parents and grandparents, and visual representations of the outdoors.

Romantic-era artists painted rolling green hills and picturesque farmland, and this has become the archetype for the modern British countryside. This is an important part of our cultural heritage and is an invaluable

human resource in connecting to the past. However, it does not meet the ecological and climate-related challenges of the present and future.



Wild futures – picturing a future to look forward to
(Daniel Locke, artist)

shift towards environmental stewardship. However, a large portion of young people remain disconnected from nature. According to a recent survey by master's students¹ at The University of Sussex, over half of 15-25 year olds felt that their age group didn't engage with nature. These young people also suggested that apathetic attitudes towards nature might be overcome with 'more influence from friends and social groups', suggesting that empowering young people to pass on their knowledge and enthusiasm for wildlife is key.

Our project – 'Wild Futures'

With this in mind, Rewilding Sussex are developing the 'Wild Futures' project, a journey into the wild sites of Sussex where a group of 15 enthusiastic young people (aged 16-25) can better appreciate the diverse potential of the UK landscape and generate new and exciting visions for its future. We will give our diverse group of young people the opportunity to explore nature, consider their own relationship with the land and influence their peers in becoming more involved in their own ecological futures.

We plan to visit sites throughout Sussex with diverse and innovative approaches to land management, ranging from rewilding, to biodynamic farming, to more traditional conservation management, and including places like Knepp Wildlands, Tablehurst Farm,

Ashdown Forest and Seven Sisters. The Rewilding Sussex team - Dr Christopher Sandom, Daniel Locke, Dr Rachel White, Izzy Taylor and Betsy Gorman - will accompany the core group of 15 young people in exploring the natural and cultural history of these landscapes. We will engage in local ecology, photography, drawing, camping, and interviewing landowners so that management of the land can be better understood.



'Rewilding' young people

With our increasing disconnection from a wilder past, accelerated by the rise of urbanisation, there is an urgent need to re-evaluate our current relationship with the landscape and paint a more promising picture for the future. We at Rewilding Sussex believe that listening to and acting on the visions of young people, who will be disproportionately affected by the ecological and climate crises, is an essential part of achieving this.

Youth-led movements, such as the school climate strikes, show a promising cultural



Exmoor pony at Knepp wildlands (Betsy Gorman)



Students explore Pagham Harbour, West Sussex

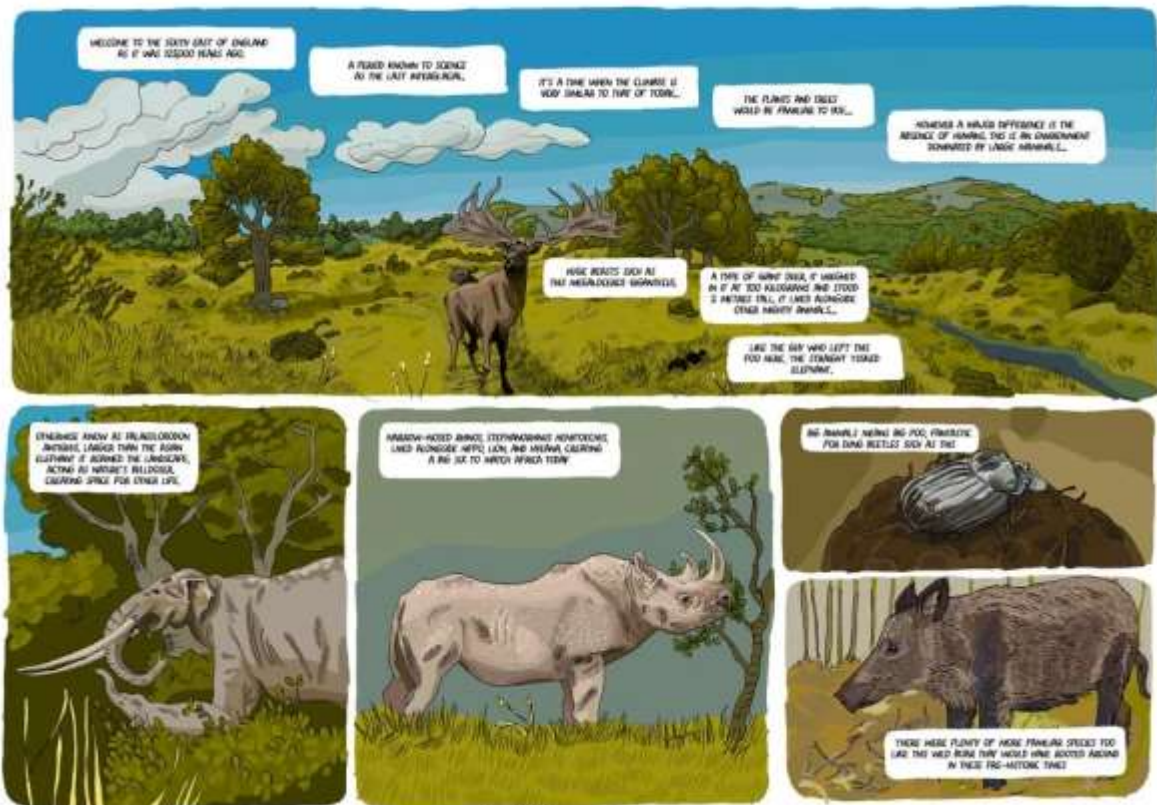
(Izzy Taylor)

By keeping a journal of their experiences and documenting how they feel about the habitats they see, we hope to inspire our youth group to develop grand visions for an ecologically sustainable future. We also hope to kick-start meaningful careers in conservation through building skills in ecology, debating, orienteering, giving presentations, and gaining confidence in their own voice in shaping the future.

Our long-term aim is to use what has been learnt about the wild sites to form guides or templates for other interested landowners. By combining their intrinsic knowledge of the land with the fresh vision of younger ecologists, there is a real chance to form more diverse landscapes that benefit both people and nature across Sussex and the rest of the UK.

Picturing a future to look forward to – bringing it all together

From a previous project 'Through the Bush Backwards'² illustrated by artist Daniel Locke, we have found graphic art to be a highly successful medium in sharing scientific concepts with young audiences. By combining the input of the youth group with the efforts of our artistic team we are hoping to create a graphic novel showcasing our experiences on this wild journey. Images will depict personal journeys and reasons for working in ecology, the current landscape based on our own explorations, and, crucially, a 'blueprint' of what Sussex could look like based on the visions of our young people. This story will also be shared online and in Brighton-based art galleries to spark conversations in the wider public about what nature means to them.



Panel from ‘through the bush backwards’ a journey through time highlighting the changing fauna and flora of Britain (Daniel Locke, artist)

Supporting the project

This project is dependent on us securing funding and we are looking for people to help us on this exciting journey into our wild future. If you share Rewilding Sussex's key principles of acting locally to bring communities together, inspiring others through rewilding, taking youth-led approaches, and incorporating wild visions to inspire narratives of hope, then please contact us at: rewildingsussex@gmail.com. If you are based in Sussex, you can help us in the following ways:

- 1 Become one of our 15 young people who want to boost their skills, experience wild landscapes, and lend their voice to shaping future habitats
- 2 Be an inspiring landowner and begin talks on how you can adapt your land to benefit nature and future generations
- 3 Act as a stakeholder for the project and lend your support to our funding application so we can make this wild future a reality.

Rewilding Sussex Website: <https://rewildingsussex.org/>

Authors:

Betsy Gorman ([linkedin.com/in/betsyjbrown/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/betsyjbrown/))

Izzy Taylor ([linkedin.com/in/isobel-taylor/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/isobel-taylor/))

Links

- 1 <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/lifesci/public-engagement>
- 2 <http://www.daniellocke.com/projects/#/through-the-bush-backwards/>

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation have launched an outreach programme for pupils in Dorset, Hampshire and Surrey. The programme is designed for schools near to lowland heaths, a critical habitat for reptile species, and covers the science/biology curriculum from 5-year-olds to university students. To take part visit <https://www.arc-trust.org/snakes-in-the-heather>

www.avontyrrell.org.uk Home of national charity, UK Youth, Avon Tyrrell Outdoor Centre is a leading outdoor learning venue dedicated to the continuous development of young people. Through an extensive range of inclusive outdoor activities and tailored programmes, they provide the opportunity for everyone to 'Experience, Learn and Develop'.

Froglife's Green Pathways projects work with vulnerable and disadvantaged young people in Peterborough and Glasgow to improve their confidence, aspirations, social skills and positive behaviour through conservation activities improving their local green spaces for wildlife. To get young people involved or volunteer please email: louise.smith@froglife.org (Glasgow) or holly.freeman@froglife.org (Peterborough).

Animal Careers Conference - This inspiring conference is ideal for anyone looking to pursue a career working with animals. Giving you the tools to kick start your career, you'll learn from experts working with animals in a range of exciting roles, get advice on job and voluntary opportunities and network with likeminded people. <https://c-js.co.uk/2KSfioS>

Spitalfields Farm is part of an incredibly diverse community that unfortunately has high levels of deprivation. The work we carry out helps break the cycle of poverty related issues, whilst engaging inner-city children with nature and conserving their future. To enquire about visiting or to help our work continue: education@spitalfieldscityfarm.org

9Trees.org helps individuals to take a positive step toward reducing their carbon footprint.

This Grass roots organisation is creating sustainable countryside jobs and aims to plant millions of trees! Get involved! From a nature conservation background, promoting native wildlife and sustainable woodlands. They plant and geolocate trees for you. info@9trees.org



Over the past three years, we have worked with over 500 young people (aged 11-24) through our pioneering youth development project – Our Wild Coast. The project aims to re-connect young people to nature and help them to become custodians and ambassadors for the natural environment in their own communities. chris.baker@northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk
<https://c-js.co.uk/2Dc3wkU>

In a WWOOF volunteering exchange you can learn to grow / cook / preserve food, keep animals, plant trees, build using natural fibres, create energy from renewables and make links with people living sustainably. You can join WWOOF UK from 16 years upwards for your alternative living and learning adventure. <https://wwof.org.uk/wwofer/register>

The Field Studies Council at Flatford Mill is running a range of youth based environmental training programmes during 2020, such as a Marine Science Camp on 29-31 May. Other Natural History courses are also available. A bursary fund to support students is available. enquiries.fm@field-studies-council.org 01206 297110

Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, Middlesbrough Environment City and ACTES have been delivering an Our Bright Future project "One Planet Pioneers". We have been working with disadvantaged young people, through engagement in environmental action including volunteering, training and apprenticeships to develop young people as environmental advocates and leaders of the future. <https://c-js.co.uk/32EDXmJ>

Keeping it Wild empowers and inspires young people to gain skills in conservation. Opportunities have been provided for 269 11-25-year olds so far, with a focus on engaging individuals from under-represented backgrounds. One participant commented: "conservation can be a bit scary, and 'not for us' – this gives us a foot in the door".
<https://www.wildlondon.org.uk/keeping-it-wild>

Talking Point

Robin Bowman & Chris Salisbury describe the tactic of using popular fiction to encourage teens to engage with the natural world.



Which bird's call can warn of an oncoming storm? Which mushroom can you use to light a fire? Do you know? Do your children know? If not, does that matter? The answers to these questions are just some of what humans have known about the natural world since we first inhabited the western edge of Europe 800,000 years ago.



Boys river walk (Chris Salisbury)

Half of our generation, growing up in the 1970s and 1980s, regularly played and roamed in wild places, compared with just one in ten today. 2014 became the year we could no longer avoid the subject of Nature-deficit disorder, a term coined by Richard Louv to describe the effect changes in modern lifestyles are having on our children, and the starvation that their interaction with the natural environment is causing their wellbeing and health. The National Trust's 2012 report *Natural Childhood* came out with some frightening statistics. On average Britain's children watch more than 17 hours of television a week and spend more than 20 hours a week online. There is little doubt that there are some serious problems, with one in twelve adolescents self-harming, 35,000 on anti-depressants, and around three in ten children in

England aged between 2 and 15 either obese or overweight. All these problems have been, at least in part, attributed by researchers to a decrease in the time today's children spend outdoors compared to previous generations.

Depressing stuff. However, it's also clear through the evidence of research that the benefits to children who are exposed to nature are overwhelming. They score higher in almost every category, whether concentration and reasoning, or reading and writing, whilst consistently showing general overall behavioural improvement, as well as responsibility, better attitude and leadership. More importantly, their self-esteem, motivation and confidence are greater.

But the long-term effects of this dislocation with nature, not just for us, but for the natural world, must not be underestimated – not least because, as Louv says, "If we are going to save environmentalism and the environment we must also save an endangered species: the child in nature."

Since 1999, we at WildWise have been considering the particular challenge of how to coax modern teenagers away from their screens to spend meaningful time in nature. We know we are up against a vast marketing machine invested in keeping children and young people indoors with video games and social media and shopping addictions. We decided to look more closely at engaging with the teenagers' interests, and we launched a series of five-day camps based in the woods and inspired entirely by the trilogy of books and films *The Hunger Games*.

In brief, *The Hunger Games* is a 2008 science-fiction novel by the American writer Suzanne Collins, written in the voice of 16-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who lives in the post-apocalyptic nation of Panem. The 'Capitol', a highly advanced metropolis, exercises political control over the rest of the nation. The Hunger Games are an annual event in which one boy and one girl aged between 12 and 18 from each of the twelve districts surrounding the 'Capitol' are selected by lottery to become the 'Tributes', and have to compete in a televised battle to the death in a vast wilderness 'Arena'. Although combat skills are important, it is the bushcraft and wilderness skills Katniss learned hunting with her father that stand her in good stead.



Teenager pyramid (Chris Salisbury)

We realised that at WildWise we already had all the expertise, skills and resources to design a camp based on the hugely successful Hunger Games concept, and that this could be just the siren we needed to call the

teenagers outdoors and into the woods. And we were right, because they have answered this call. And they came in droves.

But there is something else interesting and important going on here...



Hunger Games Nerf Battle (Robin Bowman)

Traditionally, since the early days of the Scout movement, bushcraft and messing about in woods have been more in the domain of teenage boys than of teenage girls. We have seen this played out very clearly in our events – the teenage girls go missing from the outdoors. I have seen with my own teenage daughters how the high street has caught their attention, and how peer pressure prevents them from choosing the great outdoors. The real challenge is how to coax teenage girls into participating in these bushcraft and woodland-skills-based camps and thus into a deep connective experience with Nature. Here's where the Hunger Games idea comes up trumps, as the real hero of the story is a strong, empowered teenage girl. Not only does

the film have a female lead, but it's a role that hasn't been over-sexualised. Stories, especially blockbusters and bestsellers, that portray young women in this light are far too few and far between. I'm delighted to report that teenage girls have made up more than half of the participants in our Hunger Games events. And what's more, it's the girls rather than the boys who succeed in being crowned 'Victors'.

So how does it all work in the field? In the WildWise Hunger Games, 'Tributes' arrive at our 'Capitol' and spend the first two days camping together at the 'Training Camp', learning all the wilderness and survival skills they'll need in the 'Arena'. These include fire making, archery, sneaking and stalking, shelter/den building, camouflage, edible and medicinal plant use, setting snares, and Nature-awareness skills such as bird language. They will also be winning sponsors, hoping to get support from a gift parachuted into the Arena. On the morning of the third day, pairs of Tributes enter the Arena and the Games begin. Grabbing a backpack from the 'Cornucopia' filled with all the essential survival stuff such as sleeping bag, basic food, water bottle and something to help make a shelter, and armed with a trusty nerf-gun, each participant takes off into the wildwoods to survive, to make fires, to find food and water, and to 'kill' the other tributes with the nerf-gun by stalking, camouflage and sneaking, in the hope of becoming 'Victors'. Far from their computer screens, it's the ultimate game of 'Manhunt'/'40-40'/'Capture the Flag' – a unique and magical time immersed deep in the woods in an elaborate role-play. And if you are concerned about the competitive element and violent undercurrents in the books and film, this aspect is not given any attention, in fact, to the contrary, it's been a remarkable community-building experience, and in the 6 years we've been running these camps I'm delighted to report we've seen some of the very best nature connection in the young people we've ever had.

So maybe, just maybe, if you ask your teenagers next year which bird can warn you of an oncoming storm or which mushroom you can use to start a fire, they'll look at you with a twinkle in the eye and say that they could tell you but it would be better if you yourself went to the woods, like our ancestors did, to find out for yourself.



Hunger Games group (Robin Bowman)

Robin Bowman, lead instructor on the WildWise Hunger Games & **Chris Salisbury**, director of WildWise

Find out more

The 2019 WildWise Hunger Games

www.wildwise.co.uk

References

- Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-deficit Disorder* (Workman Books, 2008)
 Stephen Moss, *Natural Childhood* (National Trust, 2012)
 Aric Sigman, *Agricultural Literacy: Giving Concrete Children Food for Thought* (2007)

A back-to-basics campsite for young people.

Camping & indoor accommodation, nestled in a secluded part of the Wye valley, the site hugs the river Wye and is surrounded by acres of ancient woodland. Biblins offers access to one of the finest areas for outdoor learning in the country. www.biblins.org.uk

BF Adventure supports children and young people

facing life's toughest challenges, by using heathland, woodland and flooded quarries to enable them to overcome barriers. Being immersed in nature is new for many and we've seen great improvements in well-being. Nature is also central to our school residentials, adventure sessions, childcare and corporate events. 01326 340912 www.bfadventure.org

After over fifty years Suntrap Forest Centre

an environmental educational centre in Epping Forest owned by London Borough of Waltham Forest will be closed until mid 2020. A major £4.5 million refurbishment is underway and will make the site fully accessible; and provide sustainably heated wooden camping pods, state-of-the-art camping pavilion and alfresco classroom. Visit www.suntrapcentre.co.uk

A 'wild about learning' project

run by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery, inspires the next generation of conservationists through outdoor educational opportunities ranging from primary school Nature Clubs to Call of the Wild bushcraft days encouraging teenagers to swap screen time for eco-survival skills! <https://c-js.co.uk/2rnhoWZ>

Do you know a young person who is keen on nature and is actively recording wildlife?

At the National Biodiversity Network (NBN), we are keen to celebrate the work of young wildlife-lovers! In fact, every year we run the NBN Awards for Wildlife Recording – which has an award category especially for young people (aged 11-20).

As so many wildlife recorders (both young and older) are volunteers - we feel that it's particularly important to acknowledge the time that they give for free and applaud their many achievements. After all, the data from wildlife recording underpin all our conservation efforts!

To find out about the 2020 NBN Young Person's Award (and the other categories of NBN Awards for Wildlife Recording) please subscribe to our free monthly e-newsletter, Network News. That way you'll be the first to hear about the launch of the 2020 NBN Awards, around May, and you can get your nomination(s) in early... You can even nominate yourself!

Subscribe at <http://ow.ly/nu1n50x4sOt>



Project partners



Shropshire
Wildlife Trust



FSC
BRINGING
ENVIRONMENTAL
UNDERSTANDING TO ALL

Funded environmental courses and activities for young people (11-25) with Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Field Studies Council and Fordhall Farm, based in Shropshire. Day and residential courses covering a range of subjects from species identification to landscape photography, Conservation work parties, Youth Forum, Work experience, Summer placement, Traineeships. <http://growingconfidenceproject.co.uk/>

The CJS Team would like to thank everyone who has contributed adverts, articles and information for this CJS Focus publication.

Next edition will feature Volunteering, published 10 February 2020, we are also covering the practicalities of environmental and outdoor education in May 2020.

A4 sides this CJS Focus: 31 - Details believed correct but given without prejudice, Ends.