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John Muir Festival and John Muir Way Events 2014

Purpose

This is an update for local authorities and key partners about the John Muir Festival and the related John Muir Way Events programme. The short note below describes the background to both initiatives. We would like to see lots of local communities and groups involved in events and activities along the length of the John Muir Way. We would welcome your feedback on ideas for potential events and activities for both initiatives. We will then be in a better position to work together on the details, including what sort of support might be required.

Introduction

One of the signature events in Homecoming Scotland 2014 is the **John Muir Festival**, which will run from 17 to 26 April. Highlights of the Festival will include the launch of the John Muir Trail on 21 April and the international opening of the Helix and Kelpies near Falkirk. The Festival will celebrate and explore the life and legacy of John Muir, a Scots born naturalist and founder of America's National Parks, taking place along the length of the John Muir Way. The development and delivery of the Festival will be coordinated and managed by UZ Arts who have been appointed by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Creative Scotland, Events Scotland and East Lothian Council <http://uzarts.com/john-muir-festival-2014>.

The specific locations and individual events which will form part of the John Muir Festival programme will be managed by UZ Arts who are also calling for expressions of

interest from community partners for activities to take place along the John Muir Way 17-26 April.

In addition to the Festival itself, SNH is keen to support a number of activities and encourage more people to get out and enjoy the John Muir Trail on their door step throughout the nine local authority areas. These events and activities will be known as “**John Muir Way Events**”, and will run from the 27 April to the 13th June. The events will be held on the week ends of 3/4 – 10/11- 17/18- 24/25 May .31 May 1 June-7/8- June with a day or so in the week where appropriate. These dates are selected so there is no overlap with the many other important events that are happening in 2014. The Queen’s Baton for the Commonwealth Games commences on the 14th June.

For more information see the following SNH link <http://www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/year-of-natural-scotland-2013/celebrate-john-muir/john-muir-way/>

John Muir Festival

The objectives of the John Muir Festival are to:

- celebrate the life and legacy of John Muir in an inspirational and creative way, with wide community involvement, mass participation and convergence on key locations along the Trail
- raise the international and national profile of Scotland as the birthplace of John Muir
- inspire and encourage people to connect with Scotland’s outdoors and to use the Trail to get active and to explore and experience nature
- be a high profile event within the Homecoming Scotland 2014 programme
- consolidate John Muir Day (21 April) as a strong, high profile date in the Scottish calendar

The key audiences for the Festival are people living in Scotland, with a focus on local communities across central Scotland, and people visiting Scotland from the rest of the UK and overseas - particularly the USA.

The Festival will run from 17 to 26 April and will include the official opening of the John Muir Way, the international opening of the Helix & Kelpies project in Falkirk, a number of themed events in East Lothian, recognising the birthplace of John Muir in Dunbar, and a number of other events at key locations along the Trail.

The successful contractor has been tasked with developing a creative and unifying theme for the Festival and then delivering it. **John Muir Way Events**

The John Muir Way Events programme will run from 27 April to 13 June. It aims to:

- build on the opening of the Way on 21 April 2014
- promote the Way and encourage people to start using it now and in the future, mainly through walking & cycling

- raise awareness of the natural heritage and history accessible to people on their door step
- encourage people to take a positive interest in the local countryside
- raise awareness of the economic potential with local businesses

The official opening of the Way is a one-off event that should attract tens of thousands of people along its length. This will be particularly useful in terms of raising the profile of the Way and awareness of it. The core idea behind John Muir Way Events is to have a whole series of events and activities that are designed to build long-term use and enjoyment of the route. We are particularly keen to use this to reach out to a wide range of groups and people that may not necessarily feel that the Way is for them. This could include people living in socially disadvantaged areas, health groups, volunteering groups, family groups, social care groups and so on.

We want to encourage and support events and activities that are already being planned by local authorities and a wide range of other organisations that could support widespread early use of the Way.. We're also keen to support new ideas that communities, groups and organisations would like to run which could feed into this overall effort. It is intended that the launch will be the start of encouraging and sustaining a wide range of local groups, such as health walks and volunteering groups, to come up with creative ways of using the route and passing on to others their experiences.

While John Muir Way Events will be a programme primarily targeted at local people, many of the events and activities should also appeal to visitors to the area. This would include early route users following the launch. Local people would include family and friends, school children, community groups, special interest groups, local business and landowners.

In developing and promoting the Way, we are already working with a wide range of partners including:

Central Scotland Green Network,

Cyclist Touring Club

Falkirk Community Trust

Forestry Commission Scotland

Historic Scotland

John Muir Trust

Local Authorities (Argyll & Bute Council, City of Edinburgh Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, East Lothian Council, Falkirk Council, North Lanarkshire Council, Stirling Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, West Lothian Council)

Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Authority

National Trust for Scotland

Ramblers Scotland

Scottish Canals

Sustrans

To help planning and to focus activity, we propose that events and activities should be organised mainly for weekends, though we would also welcome group activities that take place during each week. The weekend dates are April 27, May 3/4, May 10/11, May 17/18, May 24/25, May 31/June 1 and June 7/8.

Here are some suggestions for the sorts of activities which could be included as part of the John Muir Way Events programme:

- guided walks along sections of the route with special interest themes
- health walks
- visits organised for older people, black and ethnic minority groups and less abled groups
- leader-led walking, cycling, horse riding, canoeing and barge trips
- John Muir Award activities
- practical conservation tasks
- John Muir interpretation by actors
- historic re-enactments
- youth groups, school trips and field trips aimed at children
- children's arts & crafts, theatre and music activities

We welcome your involvement and participation. **Please respond to Catriona Scriven (contact details below) with your ideas for proposed events/activities and dates by the end of November 2013.** Please include as much detail as possible.

Funding support

We expect that in some cases there may be modest funding needs and, once we have feedback on the range of potential events and activities, we will consider how we can best support any unfunded costs for worthwhile events. We are keen to support wide promotion of the programme thus ensuring even better turnouts. We are looking for a good geographical spread of events across the whole route as well as from a broad range of interest groups. Once we have a better idea of the potential for these events and activities following your feedback, we can provide further information on what support might be available.

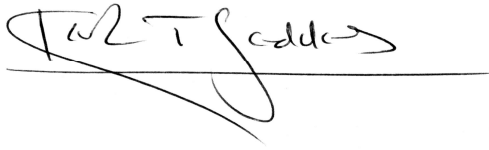
We'd like to hear from you.

Please give some thought about what you or your organisation can do to support both of these initiatives. Do send us your ideas and suggestions, so we can collate and support a number of excellent activities that will encourage community participation and engagement with this exciting new route.

If it would be useful, we could arrange a meeting to consider all the projects proposed and develop a programme together.



SNH Richard Davison Programme Manager



CSGN Keith Geddes chair of CSGN Partnership Board

For enquiries about the John Muir Festival, please contact: Marion Mulholland (SNH, Edinburgh) 0131 3162612 / 07881 673352 e marion.mulholland@snh.gov.uk

For enquiries about the John Muir Trail Events, please contact Catriona Scriven (SNH, Clydebank) 0141 951 0871/ 07795 427246 e Catriona.scriven@snh.gov.uk

John Muir Festival 17-26 April FAQs

Background

John Muir April 21, 1838 – December 24, 1914. John Muir, born in Dunbar East Lothian is renowned in the United States as the father of conservation. He was a Scottish-born American naturalist, author, and early advocate of preservation of wilderness in the United States. His letters, essays, and books telling of his adventures in nature have been read by and have influenced millions. The spiritual quality and enthusiasm toward nature expressed in his writings inspired readers, including presidents and congressmen, to take action to help preserve large nature areas. He is today referred to as the "Father of the National Parks". Muir's biographer, Steven J. Holmes, believes that Muir has become "one of the patron saints of twentieth-century American environmental activity," both political and recreational.

UZ Arts www.uzarts.com have been commissioned by Scottish Natural Heritage www.snh.org.uk to produce a Festival celebrating the life and achievements of John Muir in an inspirational and creative way. Included in the Festival will be the international opening of the Helix & Kelpies project in Falkirk and the launch of the John Muir Way. Stretching from John Muir's birthplace in Dunbar to the waters of the Clyde at Helensburgh, this new Way will allow everyone to explore the nature and landscapes of Central Scotland and visit Scotland's first National Park at Loch Lomond and the Trossachs.. Event Scotland will support the festival as part of Homecoming 2014.

Artists/Events/Commissioning

The Festival will be curated by UZ Arts. UZ will be programming and commissioning events to

- a. launch the Festival and John Muir Way
- b. conclude the Festival
- c. focus on hotspots along the way

How do you get involved?

1. UZ will produce an inclusive programme of activity in relation to the commissioned artwork.

2. UZ invite individuals and organisations to propose events/projects to be included in the Festival. If UZ consider the event is suitable, they will endorse the event by letter of support and include in the Festival programme. These projects need to be self-funded and self-managed. Endorsed events will need to adhere to a timescale for fundraising and marketing.

Proposal forms are available from helen@uzarts.com . Proposals should be submitted ASAP cut off date for all proposals is end of October. Proposals will be assessed and notified by end of November – any organisations requiring an earlier decision in order to access external funding pls contact UZ. Deadline for endorsed events to be fully funded, managed and ready for inclusion in programme is 1ST FEB 2014. Proposals that can't meet this timescale will not be able to be included in the endorsed Festival events programme.

3. SNH Events: Catriona Scriven is inviting further events to take place 28th April - 13June

Money

UZ are not a funding organisation so will not be funding any events beyond the curated programme.

UZ welcome discussion from local authorities or organisations where additional resources or funds can be provided in order to enhance activity in their area.

Benefits to your area

Put your area literally on the APP.

Encourage people to go outdoors and experience nature

Increase visitors and extend their stay

Take part in a high profile Festival which is innovative, imaginative and inspiring and part of Homecoming 2014

Link communities and organisations along the route in shared interest

Where is it?

The Festival will have key events in Dunbar, Helensburgh and/or Balloch with further activity throughout the route.

Further details and a map of the trail can be found at:

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/year-of-natural-scotland-2013/celebrate-john-muir/john-muir-trail/>**When is it?**

John Muir Festival : 17th to 26th April 2014

International opening of the Helix and the unveiling of The Kelpies in Falkirk: 17th -20th April 2014

Official opening of the

John Muir Way: 21st – 26th April 2014

Finale 26th April 2014

CONTACT: Helen@uzarts.com 07725226912 / 0141 5594910