

AGM: CCWT 29th May 2017 - Project Officer's Report – Fiona Saywell

While this past year has had its funding challenges as in recent years, some success has materialised from the Coigach & Assynt Living Landscape application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. With the much anticipated go ahead received in June 2016, a project staff team was put in place and the first projects got underway on 1st September. CCWT has also continued with the hosting of public events and fundraising through various inventive means. Alongside collaborative work with other conservation organisations, all this has kept the office and woodland busy places to be.

Outdoor and Woodland Learning Project

Katrina Martin and I have been employed by Scottish Wildlife Trust as Education Manager, on a job share basis, to run the project for CCWT. This has involved continuing with the work started with Lochinver Pre School and expanding the programme to the Nursery, Primary and High Schools in Lochinver, Achiltibuie and Ullapool. Particular programmes have included: Hill to Grill, where S2 pupils learnt to stalk (with a camera in hand), examined two recently culled deer and visited the larder at the Assynt Foundation where they got very hands on with the meat. We finished with barbecued venison and a cooking session at the High School kitchen. The P7 John Muir Award transition programme included all the feeder schools for Ullapool High School and helped the pupils get to know their future classmates alongside learning to care for wild places which included Isle Martin, Culag Woods and Acheninver Beach. The most recent programme was a 4 day adventure island excursion to Tanera Mor where S1 pupils camped out, learnt about woodland, seashore and freshwater environments, went on a mini expedition and canoed around the island. Regular sessions have also got underway with P1 pupils and Achiltibuie Nursery school. All of this has been possible with the assistance of Andy and Jenny from the Highland Council Ranger Service, Don and Romany (JMT), Noel Hawkins (SWT Living Seas Officer), John Venters (Assynt Foundation) and all the teaching staff who have made it possible with their enthusiasm and 'can do' attitude in arranging to get all the pupils to various sites so they can learn in the outdoor environment; a true partnership project.

Froglife: Worked with Froglife staff to appoint a contractor to carry out expansion of open water areas in the Dragonfly Bog to improve the habitat for amphibians. Other habitat improvement for reptiles was carried out at Little Assynt along the Loch an t-Sabhail Path where areas were strimmed to create better basking spots. Froglife supplied CCWT with new strimmers in order to maintain these areas. Training sessions were carried out in reptile and amphibian identification and habitat maintenance.

Plantlife: Worked with Plantlife staff and Andy Summers to develop a leaflet describing a self-guided walking route highlighting the features of the Celtic Rainforest. This leaflet has been printed and distributed locally, it is also available on the CCWT website.

Little Assynt estate leaflet: Funding has been received from Discover Assynt (Tourism Group) to produce updated leaflets. These will be in print shortly.

Target Zero run: a fun run for the local schools at the All Abilities Path (in celebration of the maintenance project funded by Paths for All and Brown Forbes) has been arranged for 9th June.

Woodmiser: maintenance has been carried out by Ken Maclennan and Julian Jacobsen which has enabled some wood being milled once again. Thank you to both for your work on this.