

COUNTDOWN TO THE LAUNCH OF THE JOHN MUIR TRAIL

Sunday 21st April 2013 marks a year from the launch of the John Muir Trail – and a huge amount of work has already been completed.

Fittingly the new long distance route, which passes through Edinburgh, will open on John Muir's birthday on 21st April 2014 and forms part of the celebrations to mark the centenary of the Scots born naturalist's death.

The John Muir Trail will link Muir's birthplace in Dunbar to Helensburgh via Scotland's first National Park – Loch Lomond and the Trossachs and will take in Edinburgh along the way. The trail will celebrate John Muir's life, promoting his ideas and providing a memorable walking experience for both local people and overseas visitors.

The 105 mile (169km) trail will follow some existing routes such as the John Muir Way in East Lothian. In other sections, new paths are being created. The route will enable walkers, cyclists and horse riders to easily visit some of the most beautiful coastal scenery, sweeping landscapes, wildlife sites and historic visitor attractions across Scotland's heartland.

Although the full route is not yet open, there have been many local path improvements, giving walkers and cyclists a boost already.

In Edinburgh, the Brunstane Burn path will be a key section of the John Muir Trail linking Holyrood Park and east Edinburgh with Musselburgh. At the moment, this path is muddy and overgrown but it is being improved for cyclists and walkers by the City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Natural Heritage John Muir Trail project.

The route will be waymarked with The John Muir Trail signs, and a website, book, leaflets and map will give people all the information they need to complete part or all of the trail.

Conservationist John Muir was born in Dunbar in 1838, before emigrating to the United States in 1849. Amongst his achievements, he helped save the Yosemite Valley in California, was a Co-founder of The Sierra Club – one of the most influential grassroots environmental organisations in the USA – and successfully campaigned for National Parks in America.

The launch of the new route is an integral part of the Year of Homecoming 2014 and its opening will be one of a number of events to “Bring John Muir Home”. Muir’s life, work and legacy will be a focus of national and international attention with John Muir 2014 providing one of the signature themes for the year.

Creating a new John Muir Trail is a flagship project for the Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN). Keith Geddes, Chair of the CSGN Partnership Board, which developed the concept of the route, commented: “John Muir is considered one of the patron saints of 20th century American environmental activity. He is noted for being a conservationist, naturalist, geologist, inventor and explorer. However, despite the magnificent efforts of East Lothian Council, the John Muir Trust and the John Muir Museum in Dunbar, Americans still tend to know more about him than Scots.

“This is why the new route is a fitting way to celebrate a man who through his life, writings and legacy, could inspire a new generation of Scots to recognise the value of nature and the outdoors.

“It will take walkers and cyclists from Muir’s birthplace through Scotland’s first national park, through Edinburgh to Helensburgh. It’s a great way to highlight the fact that he

was born in Scotland and that one of his great achievements was to play a central part in establishing national parks in the United States.”

The hard work involved in developing the route is being carried out by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). Ron McCraw of SNH, explained: “We’ve made a lot of progress in the last year. We now have 80% of the route in place and it’s sure to be a spectacular walk across the country that many people will enjoy. Some places in the Central Belt are already enjoying the benefits of work on the route with improved local paths.

“It will certainly be an exciting day in 2014 when people can enjoy the entire route – but it’ll also be a terrific way for families to have a day out for shorter sections of the route near them.”

Not only will the new route celebrate Muir’s life and achievements, but it will also create significant and lasting economic benefit. A study commissioned by SNH estimates that some 700 jobs could be created over the first five years of the route’s existence and contribute £25 million to the local economy.

For further information about the John Muir Trail please contact johnmuirtrail@snh.gov.uk

Submitted by [Central Scotland Green Network](#)