

NEWS UPDATE

Points of Interest

CCWT made a shortlist of three for a Best Practice Award in the category "Best Contribution to Rural Development in Scotland through the use of European Structural Funds".



November snow in Culag Woods.

Do you recognise the path?

Next Issue:

Come and see the renovations to the nest in Culag Woods.

Results from the Lochs Project.

More Forest School news.

Contact:
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Successful Funding Bid for Culag Wood



One of the paths to be widened

In September, CCWT received good news from the SRDP that the Culag Wood Access Project funding application had been successful. 75% of the required costs to upgrade and add to the existing path network in Culag Woods was confirmed. It is estimated that these alterations will cost just over £117, 000 so CCWT have been working on securing the final 25%. If this is also successful then the work is scheduled to start in the New Year.

The proposals include upgrading the School Path which enters the wood across the road from Lochinver Primary School. This path has become heavily overgrown and largely inaccessible. The new proposal would give direct pedestrian access to the entrance of Culag Woods for all members of the community. The path will connect with the existing network to give access to the whole woods.

Culag Enterprises Path Team working at Quinag and Sandwood Bay for John Muir Trust

Following on from last year's contract with JMT at Quinag, Culag Enterprises have continued this established working relationship by adding to the pathwork at Quinag and upgrading some of the path along the walk into Sandwood Bay.

Starting at the beginning of October, the team were blessed with fine weather for the majority of the time. However, in the last week winter returned to Assynt whilst the higher sections of the path were being completed! One of the areas of the path which

was upgraded include the slab route path which links the stalkers path to the ridge up to Spidean Coinnich. This was done to try and encourage walkers away from the short cut across the boggy moorland which was becoming eroded.

Three wet and windy weeks on the Sandwood path followed. This path has suffered from overwidening in some places to 5 or 6 metres. The path team reduced the width to 1.5 metres which will protect the exposed peat from trampling, allowing regeneration of vegetation over the next few years.



Arriving for work above the clouds
Photo: Sandy Maxwell (JMT)



Filling in the gullied section up to Sail Gharbh.
Photo: Sandy Maxwell (JMT)

Cruck Frame Shelter at Little Assynt



Setting out the foundations for the shelter

The Culag Enterprises Team have laid the foundations for the new cruck frame shelter at Loch an t-Sabhail. The Cruck Frame has arrived from Woodend Carpentry in Dunkeld

and will be erected with the assistance of Culag Enterprises. After this the drystone walling element of the project will provide further accredited training for the path team.

Are There Mink at Little Assynt?



North American Mink



Volunteers installing the raft

North American Mink have been spreading northwards through the U.K. for decades. They are known to be responsible for the decline in water voles, ground-nesting birds and salmonid fish. Recently, there have been sightings at Kylestrome, so CCWT and other community groups are taking part in a monitoring and trapping project which has proved to be highly successful in Aberdeenshire.

Elaine Fraser, who is based at Aberdeen University has provided a mink raft which is now tethered to the shore of Loch na h-Innse Fraoich at

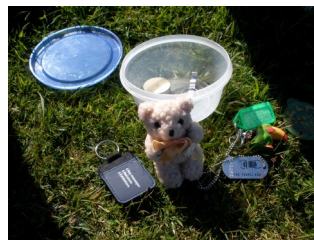
Little Assynt, near the All Abilities path. The floating base of the raft contains a basket of clay which is covered for the decline in water voles, ground-nesting birds and salmonid fish. Recently, there have been sightings at Kylestrome, so CCWT and other community groups are taking part in a monitoring and trapping project which has proved to be highly successful in Aberdeenshire. Elaine Fraser, who is based at Aberdeen University has provided a mink raft which is now tethered to the shore of Loch na h-Innse Fraoich at Little Assynt, near the All Abilities path. The floating base of the raft contains a basket of clay which is covered by a wooden tunnel. If mink are present, they will be curious and enter the tunnel, leaving their footprints in the clay. Volunteers will be checking the raft for footprints every two weeks. They have been provided with information on the most common prints found which also include those of otter, pine marten and water vole. If mink are found, then the tunnel will be replaced by a cage and, hopefully, the animal will be trapped.

Like the idea of fresh air and exercise? Why not join the Woody Group, a happy band of volunteers who meet fortnightly on Wednesday afternoons to undertake maintenance work in Culag Woods.

Sessions start at 1pm and usually last a couple of hours—refreshments are provided.

If you would like to get involved please contact us at info@culagwoods.org.uk or on 01571 844368.

Geocaching with C.C.W.T.



Contents of a Geocache



Travel Bug

Geocaching is a treasure hunting game played throughout the world. The basic idea is to locate hidden containers called geocaches with a G.P.S and then share your experiences online. There are three geocaches in Culag woods and one at Little Assynt. To become a "geocacher", you must register online at www.geocaching.com.

Geocaching is free, all you need is a valid e-mail address. Once you have joined, you can view co-ordinates and location information for

geocaches. Each geocache contains a logbook for you to sign and most of them have trinkets which you can add or take away. Sometimes they contain a travel bug which is a trackable tag attached to an item which travels from cache to cache around the world. Each tag has a unique code which the finder can use to log its travels on the website. Geocoins are special trackable coins created by other geocachers to commemorate special events. They function like travel bugs. Happy hunting!



Billy's path in Culag Woods now has a Wishing Tree. Anyone is welcome to tie his or her wish to its branches.

Lochinver Pre School Forest School Sessions

Lochinver Pre School have started regular Forest school sessions in Culag Woods. Forest School originated in Sweden in the 1950s as an approach to learning about the natural world through songs, stories and practical hands-on experience. They are now increasingly being used to deliver the curriculum throughout the UK.

The Pre School staff and Parents are working together with a CCWT Project Officer

to develop a programme linked to the newly introduced Curriculum for Excellence. Some of the topics covered so far include Autumn, Bats, Nocturnal Animals, Badgers & Camouflage. Assistance has also been given by Andy Summers, Senior Highland Council Ranger. It is hoped to extend this project by securing funding in able to offer similar sessions to other groups in the local area and continue the work with the Pre School.



Pupils from the Pre School getting to know their environment through hands on experiences in Culag Woods