



New Forest case studies



Priestlands School

In 2016 a Year 10 group studying Horticulture and Animal Husbandry worked towards their Discovery level Award, completing it in April 2017.

Their journey started with a classroom based session led by a National Park Ranger, where they learnt about the Award, who John Muir was and how he is still relevant today.

A few weeks later they met the Ranger at Wilverley Inclosure and enjoyed a two hour session discovering and exploring the area with fun activities such as blindfolded tree identification and scavenger hunts.

Subject teacher Alex Jamieson said: 'The students really enjoyed being able to explore the woodlands 'on their own terms' on the trip to Wilverley. They had lots of fun and were encouraged to see things from a personal perspective.'

By incorporating learning about aspects of the National Park with the curriculum and undertaking practical 'conserve' activities such as rhododendron removal, wildlife planting and litter picking within the school grounds and on public land next to the school grounds, the group were able to focus on their local environment which helped to maximise the relevance.

'It was great to see the enthusiasm and effort that the group put into cutting down the rhododendron and they managed to collect a huge amount of litter in a short space of time,' said Ranger Craig Daters. 'They got a real sense of satisfaction from knowing that the work they had done would have a direct positive effect on the local wildlife.'

The students also completed some written work about the history of the New Forest as a royal hunting ground and the commoning tradition. This work was then used to create a montage that was displayed within the school and at the New Forest Show.





Alex Jamieson added: 'Using the Award was easy, underpinned some of the curriculum and add value to the unit. The National Park Ranger team was great and so helpful. They guided me through the whole process and their enthusiasm was infectious to the students. I will continue to use the Award for my units and have encouraged other subject colleagues to do so as well.'

Brockenhurst College

16 students studying for a Diploma in Uniformed Public Services worked towards a Discovery level Award in 2016.

Working with a National Park Ranger, the group was introduced to the Award during two classroom sessions which was followed up with two trips to the forest where the group was introduced to some of the special qualities of the National Park.

They discovered and explored an area of ancient woodland near to the college and spent time looking at fungi, ancient oak trees, new forest ponies and simply enjoying the relaxed and peaceful atmosphere.

National Park Ranger Craig Daters said: 'By using simple but fun activities and explaining concepts using analogy, we were able to impress upon the students the wide range of special qualities that the New Forest hosts. Simple qualities such as tranquility and a sense of space are often overlooked but are incredibly important for our health and wellbeing.'





The group undertook a number of practical sessions with local groups such as helping service users at Furzey Gardens to maintain pathways and doing some hazel coppicing with Pondhead Conservation Trust.

Here they learnt that the natural environment can provide a wide range of benefits to people and wildlife, that different habitats need managing in different ways to maximise its value to wildlife and that volunteering can have a range of benefits to organisations and individuals.

Danni Doran, Course Lecturer, said: 'The group really enjoyed visiting different places in the Forest and the organisations were so welcoming. They were particularly inspired meeting people from a range of backgrounds who undertook voluntary work. I don't think it was something that most of them have ever considered before.'

Alongside some classroom based work where the group were encouraged to reflect on their personal experiences and produce a piece of work for a group montage, such as a poem, some photos and a personal 'commitment to nature', the group spoke about the Award at their graduation ceremony and the things that they enjoyed.

'We are looking forward to using the Award again next year and build upon the successes,' said Danni Doran. 'It adds a really valuable experience to the community unit in the curriculum and the students can also add this to their CVs. The Rangers were really knowledgeable and pitched their sessions at just the right level for the group. Their stories about some of John Muirs' exploits really helped to capture the groups' imagination and engender a sense of fun and adventure.'



Prince's Trust Salisbury TEAM programme

A group of 16-25 year olds on The Learning Curves Princes Trust Team programme spent a week in the New Forest as part of the National Park Authorities' Youth Action Programme (NFYAP).

NFYAP brings together 10 New Forest organisations to deliver practical and educational sessions for youth groups as part of a programme to increase self-confidence, awareness of nature and employability skills.



The five sessions all took place within the National Park on sites managed by a range of organisations including: The Forestry Commission, Hants & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Hants County Council and Pondhead Conservation Trust.

T

he participants spent time learning about the work of John Muir to influence the first National Parks in America and the subsequent 6500 protected landscapes worldwide since then.

Their session with the National Park and Forestry Commission Rangers allowed them to discover and explore some the special qualities of the New Forest, such as the ancient woodlands, heathland and streams. The session included a mixture of formal learning alongside practical activities such as stream dipping and tree identification. Having spent the whole day in the forest, the participants were encouraged to spend 15 minutes on their own within the woods to simply sit or wander quietly about enjoying the atmosphere and sense of freedom.

During the rest of the week they undertook a range of practical activities such as building artificial nests for common terns at the Lymington and Keyhaven nature



reserve, clearing woodland rides at Pondhead for the benefit of wild flowers and butterflies and foraging for wild foods and cooking on an open fire with the Wildlife Trust.

Gemma Snell, TEAM programme manager, said: 'Having the opportunity to spend time in the New Forest, learning from a range of very passionate and knowledgeable staff is so valuable to the group. Not only did we see and learn so much, we had the opportunity to explore lots of the New Forest on foot, which is something a lot of the group had never done. I think that simply going for a walk in the woods and looking at what nature offers is often under-rated. The addition of the John Muir Award to our week acts as a focus and allows us as group leaders to get the participants to reflect at the end of each day. They also really appreciate receiving their certificates at the end of our programme, knowing that they can use this to help them in the future.'

You can watch the groups' video of their John Muir Award here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1sYxETI06mg>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBli1fY1f_E

