

The Wild Man Who Changed the World – Proactive Conservation



Before you begin, read the section *The Wild Man Who Changed the World* from the John Muir graphic novel, which explains how John Muir became passionate about conservation:

'Now I was passionate about making people see why we must protect our planet. It would be the greatest work of my life.'

John Muir: Let children walk with nature, in woods and meadows, plains and mountains. . . our bodies were made to thrive where pure air is found.

But in summer, the mountain wilderness was noisy, the air black with fire smoke, as loggers cleared and felled the trees.

So I began my campaign to protect America's forests.

I wrote to the American people about the destruction of their forests. Though nervous, I gave many public talks.

John Muir: A forest of 3,000-year-old giants – all gone in a moment. Oh, the wrongs done to trees!

The people listened and they forced the politicians to act.

John Muir: Save our forests or we'll have none left!

Crowd: Defend the trees!



John Muir, Earth - Planet, Universe: Pupil Activity Support Notes

The aim of this activity is to:

- Explore why legislation is needed to help protect the natural environment
- Understand that there are conflicting demands around how land is used and the different sorts of impact this has on wildlife
- Know what you can do to help

To begin, working in pairs, establish a list of the different types of land use in Scotland, under the following headings:

Energy.....

Food.....

Transport.....

Shelter.....

Waste.....

In groups, share your lists and discuss ‘the conflicting demands there are on land use’.

When John Muir was alive he became an environmental campaigner and created strong opposition to the building of the Hetch Hetchy dam in Yosemite.

Discuss and list all the reasons why you think a dam should be built, then list all the reasons against it.



John Muir, *Earth - Planet, Universe*: Pupil Activity Support Notes

A dam is a good idea because:

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.....

A dam is a bad idea because:

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.....

Contemporary link for today

List some leisure/sport activities that you can do in the natural environment in Scotland.

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In groups, discuss the following questions and write down your answers:

- What do we mean by the natural environment in Scotland?
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- How do we share access to the natural environment? Who should get more or less access to the land and why?
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John Muir, *Earth - Planet, Universe*: Pupil Activity Support Notes

- What does conservation mean and how does it work?

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- Why does the natural environment need protecting?

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- What are the threats to Scotland's natural environment today?

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- What do we mean by legislation and why do you think it is required?

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What does an environmental campaigner/writer do?

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Once you have discussed your answers to the above questions, each group should nominate a spokesperson to share their group's thoughts with the rest of the class.

John Muir, *Earth - Planet, Universe*: Pupil Activity Support Notes

When John Muir founded the Sierra Club he said, '*I am hoping that we will be able to do something for wildness and make the mountains glad.*' Discuss the following ideas and decide what you will commit to.

Things I could do to help the natural environment in Scotland:	Things I will commit to (tick)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up and/or participate in an Eco-Schools group. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research a controversial local planning issue that affects wildlife and write letters to my MSP, local council representative or wildlife charity, sharing my thoughts. 	
Prepare a script for a video documentary film about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conservation work in Scotland. Then make the film and show it on YouTube. 	
Write an article for my school magazine encouraging others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to be proactive in relation to conservation issues and explain why we need to have protective measures for our natural world and what pupils in the school can do to help. 	
Create posters to encourage others to recycle rubbish, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce food waste and become more energy efficient. Make a commitment to do these things myself too! 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in activities such as 'guerilla greening' and create and disperse 'wild flower seed bombs' in public spaces (check permission first). 	
Take part in and complete a John Muir Award. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to create a new natural play area in my school grounds or local park with support from 'Learning through Landscapes'. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a new invention or modify an existing invention so that it is more environmentally friendly. 	

John Muir, Earth - Planet, Universe: Pupil Activity Support Notes

Things I could do to help the natural environment in Scotland – my own ideas are to:	Things I will commit to (tick)

Now create and display a 'Commitments Chart' to hang on the wall in your classroom of all the things your class are going to do.