

TREES FOR LIFE CONSERVATION WORK WEEKS 2010



Restoring the Caledonian Forest in the Scottish Highlands



Voted one of the
TOP 10
Conservation
Holidays in the
World
BBC Wildlife Magazine

www.treesforlife.org.uk



Trees for Life is an award-winning Scottish charity, working to restore the Caledonian Forest to 600 square miles of the Highlands west of Inverness. The distinctive Caledonian Forest ecosystem, dominated by Scots pine, is substantially depleted and fragmented. Only 1% of the original forest remains and overgrazing by sheep and deer prevents most natural regeneration. These remnants need special care and protection; beyond this, the forest needs to be allowed to expand in area to secure this rich ecosystem for the future.

Such restoration work is not a passive process – we have to roll our sleeves up and help Nature do its work. To date we have planted around 900,000 trees, and have fostered the growth of many thousands more naturally regenerating seedlings. Working on our estate at Dundreggan and in effective partnerships with organisations such as Forestry Commission Scotland and the RSPB, we invite volunteers to help us deliver our programme of practical work on the ground.

The Caledonian Forest needs you!

WORK WEEKS

"An excellent way to spend a week."

Ken, New Zealand

"very rewarding and fulfilling."

Manoj, Wolverhampton

"A wonderful happy week full of good humour, sharing, caring and friendship."

John, Fife

"I have had a very inspiring week doing wonderful work with lovely people."

Athene, Wanlockhead

Our Work Weeks provide an opportunity for people from all around the world, of all ages and backgrounds to help restore Scotland's natural environment.

The quotes in this brochure from our volunteers show that our Work Weeks are a source of enjoyment and inspiration. We believe that the following four key elements contribute to the quality of our volunteers' experience.

Helping the planet: The weeks provide participants with the chance to do something positive to help the planet. For many people, this is an empowering experience at a time when so much environmental news is negative.

Contact with Nature: Spending a week working amidst the forests, rivers and mountains of the Scottish Highlands provides an opportunity to observe and learn from the land itself, something that often touches people profoundly.

Sharing with others: For a week we live as a community, working together in the forest and sharing domestic tasks such as cleaning and cooking the evening meal. We seek to live in a spirit of harmony and cooperation. We begin each day's work together with an attunement – a moment's quiet reflection; also, the group will

meet on occasion to have a sharing, where we talk about how the week is going.

Education: Volunteers on a Work Week will learn various aspects of ecological restoration through practical work, discussions with group leaders and brief meetings with local rangers or land managers. There will also be opportunities to learn about local flora and fauna, hopefully getting to see many of them in their natural habitat.

What are the weeks like? Each Work Week consists of ten volunteers. Volunteers must be aged 18 and over to participate. There's no upper age limit but the work can be physically challenging. Reaching some work sites can require long walks over rough terrain so you will need to have a reasonable level of fitness to take part. However, volunteers usually find a pace of work they can cope with. We also run gentler Nursery Weeks, located at our Plodda field base, for those who feel the regular weeks may be too much for them.

Each week has two leaders, who may be Trees for Life staff members or Work Week volunteers who have been trained to lead weeks themselves.

We provide transport to and from Inverness at the start and end of the week; we also provide accommodation and food for vegetarian or vegan meals only. Cooking and other chores are done on a voluntary rota basis. The week starts with a walk to introduce the volunteers to the forest and then on Sunday the work begins. Wednesday is a day off – the group may choose to do something together or this might be an opportunity to spend some time on your own. Most working days run from around 9 am to 5 pm. In the evening, you'll have time to relax, eat, read, play games, sing or tell stories – whatever you feel moved to do!

"Imagine a beautiful, wild forest..."



THE WORK

No previous experience of conservation work is necessary to participate on our Work Weeks, but you do need to have a reasonable level of fitness. Each task begins with an explanation and demonstration by the leaders, who will also cover the safety aspects you will need to bear in mind. We provide tools and safety equipment, such as hard hats and goggles, where necessary. All the work bears directly upon some aspect of forest restoration.

Planting trees



We plant trees in areas where the forest is unlikely to regenerate itself because of the remoteness of the nearest seed sources. Planting usually takes place in exclosures, that is, within fences that prevent overgrazing by sheep and deer. Most weeks include tree planting and this year we will have a number of Work Weeks dedicated solely to planting trees. **Please note that not all Work Weeks will include tree planting.**

"One of the best weeks of my life."
David, Leeds

Felling non-native trees



Many sites that are now designated for Caledonian Forest restoration were formerly plantations of spruce and lodgepole pine, which spread seed and grow more quickly than Scots pine. Left to their own devices, the plantation trees out-compete the

native trees. The plantations also self-seed and it is this regeneration that we tackle, using bow saws and loppers. We only remove smaller trees and usually avoid working in plantations. Nearly all Work Weeks involve some non-native tree removal. Occasionally, we remove rhododendron where this invasive non-native shrub is endangering the native vegetation.

Removing fences

Where fences are no longer needed we remove them because they are an unnatural element in the landscape and pose a serious threat to birds such as the black grouse and capercaillie, which sometimes fly into them. Fence removal is a very popular and satisfying team activity as it is easy to see how much has been achieved in such a short space of time.



Tree nursery work

At our nursery at Plodda Lodge we grow some of the trees that are then planted out in the forest. Most weeks staying at Plodda will spend a day in the nursery, helping to propagate trees, weed beds, make compost and much more.



Wetland restoration

We have been using recycled plastic sheeting at various sites to dam the drainage ditches which were ploughed in for commercial plantations. This work encourages bog to re-establish, which helps create new habitat and restores lost biodiversity.



Collecting seeds & berries

We collect pine cones for their seeds in spring, while most other seeds and berries are collected in autumn. This is a leisurely activity that will take you into beautiful mature forest.

Stock fencing & treeguards

Some sites we work at do have resident, although controlled, deer populations. Here we put up small stock fences to protect both the planted trees and safeguard the naturally occurring seedlings.



Surveying & monitoring

An important element of our work is monitoring various aspects of the forest habitat. This can include wildlife and vegetation surveys as well as following up on previous years' planting projects.

Tree fertilising

As some of the land we plant on has been depleted of nutrients we supplement the planted trees with natural rock phosphate to encourage good root growth and aid the establishment of the young trees.

LOCATIONS

"It was so refreshing to feel like I was putting something back."

Sandy, Motherwell

"A good mix of work, rest and play."

Paul, Southend

"I've had the time of my life!"

Jane, Stirling

Each Work Week is based in a particular area, with the week's tasks at different sites in the locality. The accommodation will usually be a short drive of around half an hour from the sites, but may be longer due to the remoteness of some work locations.

Glen Affric NNR

The Glen Affric National Nature Reserve, managed by Forestry Commission Scotland, is often described as one of the most beautiful areas in Scotland and contains one of the largest remaining fragments of Caledonian Forest. Volunteers will be working at sites in Cougie, Glen Cannich and Glen Affric, planting trees, removing redundant fences and felling non-native trees, to help the Caledonian Forest extend north and southwest. Volunteers on these weeks usually get an opportunity to work on the tree nursery at Plodda. Accommodation will be at Plodda Lodge.



Glen Affric

Dundreggan

This year we will be working on the 10,000-acre Dundreggan Estate in Glen Moriston, which is owned and managed by Trees for Life. Tree planting will be the main focus of the work, with other tasks such as non-native removal, seed collection and survey work. Accommodation will be on the estate at Dundreggan Lodge.



Dundreggan

"Words can't describe how brilliant it was."

Katharine, Edinburgh

"Loved it!"

Eugene, London

"I've learnt so much, I'd never expected this to be as rewarding as it has been."

Gillian, Elgin

Achnashellach

Located in upper Glen Carron, Achnashellach is on the northern boundary of Trees for Life's Target Area. Much of this site is Caledonian Pine Forest, under-planted with non-native plantations. We've been assisting Forestry Commission Scotland by removing these non-native trees, restoring a wetland area and carrying out some survey work. Work on these weeks will include tree planting (spring), fence removal and non-native removal. Accommodation will be at Attadale Cottages, Strath Carron.



Achnashellach

Corrimony

At Corrimony, above Strathglass, we are helping the RSPB restore Caledonian Forest and wetland to an area of former conifer plantation. The reserve offers the chance to see many rare birds, such as black grouse, golden eagle and merlin. We will be planting trees here, getting involved in wetland restoration, as well as felling non-native trees. Some of the work sites are remote and may require a long walk over rough terrain, so a good level of fitness is necessary. Accommodation will be at Plodda Lodge.



Plodda Nursery

Plodda Tree Nursery Weeks - a gentler option

This year, we are running three Nursery weeks for those who want to make a practical contribution to the restoration of the Caledonian Forest, but who may be unable to keep up with the pace of our other Work Weeks. The work will be based around Trees for Life's nursery at Plodda Lodge, and will include collecting, planting and transplanting native tree cuttings, preparing seedbeds and work on our aspen propagation project. Accommodation is at Plodda Lodge.

Isle of Skye

We will be working on Forestry Commission Scotland's Kinloch Hills Native Woodland Restoration Project. This 7,400-hectare site is on the eastern side of this beautiful island. FCS is working to restore native woodland, heath and bog. Our tasks will include planting native broadleaves (spring), non-native tree removal, ecological survey work and fence removal. Some of the work sites are remote and require long walks over rough terrain, so a good level of fitness is necessary. Accommodation for these weeks will be at the Flora MacDonald's hostel, near Armadale.



Skye

Glen Moriston

Glen Moriston lies near the southern boundary of the Trees for Life Target Area and has a band of mixed woodland winding its way along the course of the River Moriston, with plantations and patches of native woodland on the hillsides. The work will be on Forestry Commission Scotland's Inverwick Forest and nearby estates. The forest is important for black grouse, a rare and declining species, and improving the habitat is a focus for our work. We will be removing redundant deer fencing and felling non-native trees, with the possibility of planting trees to help benefit the grouse. Accommodation for these weeks will be at Dundreggan Lodge.



Corrimony



Glen Garry

Glen Garry

Owned by Forestry Commission Scotland, this new work site is situated near the River Garry, south of Dundreggan, amongst stunning pinewood reserves that have been designated for protection and restoration at an international level. Volunteers on these weeks will be planting trees and felling non-native species, with the possibility of ecological survey work or some fence removal work. Accommodation will be at Dundreggan Lodge.

SPECIALITY WEEKS

As part of our commitment to volunteers we are introducing a new range of Work Weeks this year. These new and unique weeks will provide the volunteers with more time to explore the forest and discuss the educational aspects of the week as well as having the opportunity to carry out practical conservation work.

Buddhist Week

3rd April – Dundreggan

If you are new to Buddhism or you are already practising, this week is an ideal opportunity to spend some time in nature discussing and learning about the teachings of Buddha as well as meditating throughout the week. Time will also be allocated to practical conservation work on Dundreggan estate; planting native trees, felling non-native species or carrying out survey work.

Corporate Events Week

22nd May – Dundreggan

This week has been designed for groups or businesses to take part in restoring the Caledonian Forest with an emphasis on team building. Individually designed programmes of one to four days can also be arranged. **Contact the Work Week office on 0845 602 7386 for more details.**

Women's Week

11th Sept – Achnashellech

This week has been created in direct response to creative feedback from volunteers. It is designed for women only and will be led by female staff. This week will run as a normal Work Week with the emphasis on practical conservation work.

Forest Discovery Week

25th September - Dundreggan

This week is ideal for anyone who wants to learn more about Scottish wildlife, forest ecology and ecological restoration while making a practical contribution. Half of the week will be spent discovering what the forest has to offer from an ecological perspective; learning plant identification, wildlife tracking, conservation theory etc, while the other half will be spent carrying out practical work such as planting native trees, felling non-native species or carrying out survey work.



ACCOMMODATION

Plodda Lodge

Plodda is one of TFL's field bases. Set in the woods of Strathglass, Plodda has been renovated to accommodate our Work Week volunteers. It has solid fuel heating from a Rayburn stove, a shower-room, a well-equipped kitchen and large lounge. Sleeping accommodation for the group is in one large bunkroom. The surrounding woodland scenery is spectacular and can be easily accessed with one of the highlights being the 100-foot high Plodda Falls.



Flora MacDonald's Hostel

We will have exclusive use of the cosy Flora MacDonald's Hostel, which stands in magnificent surroundings at Kilmore in the south end of Skye. There are two dorms, a well-equipped kitchen, lounge area and drying room. The hostel is approximately half an hour's drive from the work site at Kinloch Hills, however some tasks may require a longer drive.



Attadale Cottages, Strathcarron

We will have the use of two well-appointed nineteenth century semi-detached cottages, each with bedrooms, kitchens and bathrooms with showers. Attadale is a stunning glen situated south west of our work site at Achnashellach. The surrounding hills have some great patches of woodland and the nearby Attadale house has beautiful gardens, which can be explored during time off.



Achnashellach

"A fantastic week that I will long remember."

John, Reading

Dundreggan Lodge

This is Trees for Life's newest field base and is situated on the southern boundary of Dundreggan Estate, overlooking the River



Moriston. The recently converted building has 3 bunkrooms, a well-equipped kitchen, large lounge/dining area and three bath/shower rooms. We also have a drying room! Volunteers will have the opportunity to explore the estate during their time off.

"Wonderful and inspiring!"

Linda, Wakefield



Cougie

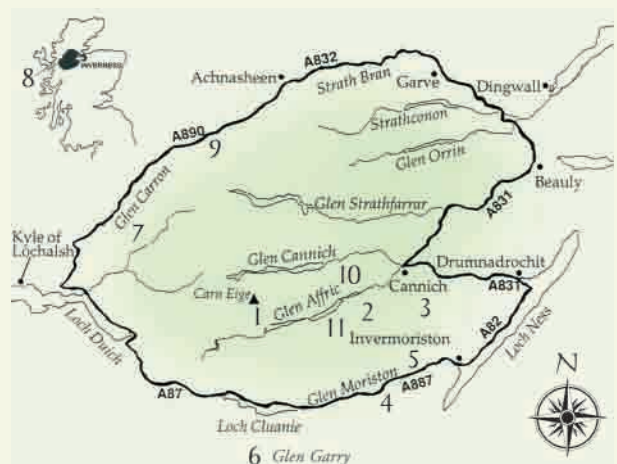
"Good for the mind and body."

Graham, Southend

Map showing the locations of the Work Weeks within Trees for Life's Target Area

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Glen Affric | 7. Attadale |
| 2. Plodda Lodge and tree nursery | 8. Skye |
| 3. Corrimony | 9. Achnashellach |
| 4. Inverwick Forest, Glen Moriston | 10. Glen Cannich |
| 5. Dundreggan | 11. Cougie |
| 6. Glen Garry | |

The inset map of Scotland shows the position of the Target Area in the Highlands



PRACTICALITIES

WORK WEEK BOOKINGS

Please read the booking terms and conditions before completing and returning the enclosed form; if you have a debit or credit card you can book online at:

www.treesforlife.org.uk/tfl.wv_booking.html or you can phone us on **0845 602 7386**. If booking close to the Work Week date, including online, please phone us to check that there are places available. Full payment must accompany your booking. We will send you a confirmation letter or email, detailing all requirements for your week.

Please await confirmation of your booking before making any travel or holiday arrangements.

Travel

The pick-up point is the central concourse of Inverness railway station at 12 noon on the Saturday (start date of your week). You'll need to make your own travel arrangements to get there, which may mean travelling to Inverness on the Friday and organising your own accommodation for that night. The Work Weeks take place some distance from Inverness, so it's not possible to return and pick volunteers up later. Similarly, it isn't possible to drive back to Inverness before the final Saturday. Please commit to the whole week. For accommodation and local travel information check the volunteer website www.tflvolunteer.org or contact Inverness tourist office (01463 234353). The Bazpackers Hostel (01463 717663) in Inverness gives a £1 per night discount to TFL volunteers. We return to Inverness railway station midmorning on the following Saturday.



The cost

It costs Trees for Life over £3,000 to run each week! Our fund-raising covers most of the costs, but the contributions that volunteers make are also vital. We have a sliding scale fee structure (see booking form) in order to make these weeks available to everyone. If you're able to pay more than the specified amount, we'd be very grateful. There is also an option of paying the full cost of an unsubsidised place on a week, which is £300.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered for public liability and limited personal accident cover.

Our insurance does not cover your personal belongings nor cover your free time activities.

Booking terms and conditions

The vast majority of our volunteers feel inspired by their Work Week and give 'excellent' or 'very good' feedback. In order to continue to provide this level of experience we ask you to agree to these terms and conditions. This will ensure that we can operate efficiently and safely in everyone's interest.

1. Work Week participants must be 18 or over.
2. Cancellations or transfers made 6 weeks or more before the Work Week start date will receive a full refund minus a £10 administration charge. Cancellations or transfers made between 6 and 4 weeks before the booking date will receive a 50% refund minus a £10 administration charge. Transfers or refunds cannot usually be given for any cancellations made within 4 weeks of the start of the Work Week. **As there are only ten places available on each week it is very important that we are notified of any cancellation or change in your booking**, as we may be able to fill your place.
3. **We need to know if you have any medical conditions**, whether you are taking medication, have any mental health issues, mental or physical disabilities, or have any previous injuries which may affect your ability to work. We may contact you to discuss this. Details are held in the strictest confidence. Please fill out the relevant section on the booking form and inform the office of any changes that occur in the period leading up to your Work Week. The vast majority of people can be accommodated.
4. Due to online, phone and postal booking methods running simultaneously, **please await confirmation of your Work Week booking before making any other arrangements**. We do our very best to keep the website updated but Work Weeks could be full by the time out of office hours bookings are processed.
5. Please commit to the entire week, which runs from Saturday to Saturday. We have essential introductory briefings on the first day and a planned schedule of work for the week. If you arrive late or leave early it is very difficult for us to achieve our goals.
6. You can do as many Work Weeks as you like but we don't accept bookings for more than 2 consecutive Work Weeks. This is due to the nature of the physical work you will be involved in, as well as group dynamics. We may contact you to discuss consecutive bookings.
7. Trees for Life accepts block bookings. If you would like to book more than one place on a week please call the office to make the booking as each person must complete an individual application. Group bookings of more than 4 people must be agreed with the Work Week office before a booking can be confirmed.
8. **Please make sure we have a mobile phone number for you**, in case we need to contact you at the time of your travel with any essential information. Also, please provide a next of kin or close friend's contact details in case of emergency.
9. Although every effort is made to describe the details of each week accurately in our literature, it is occasionally necessary for TFL to make changes at short notice to the work and accommodation. If you have any questions please contact us. Rarely, weeks are cancelled due to low numbers or factors outside of our control. In such cases we will let you know and offer an alternative week or refund your payment.
10. Non UK residents are welcome provided that you speak enough English to understand instructions and safety information. Non-EU volunteers are responsible for having the appropriate permits and paperwork for volunteering in the UK.
11. Volunteers should act responsibly in both group and social settings throughout the week as you will be acting as representatives for Trees for Life. Recreational drugs are illegal and any use during the Work Week will not be tolerated. If alcohol is consumed we request that it is done in a responsible manner so as to not affect group or work dynamics.
12. We reserve the right to refuse applications for Work Weeks or to ask a volunteer to leave if his/her behaviour is affecting the safety or general performance of the team. Volunteers may be responsible for any costs incurred through negligence.
13. In the unlikely event of you having cause for complaint, you should first tell the Work Week focaliser. If the problem remains unresolved you should write to TFL within 14 days of the end of the Work Week and we will investigate further.
14. Sorry but we cannot allow dogs on Work Weeks.
15. Data Protection Act 1998: By agreeing to these terms and conditions you are giving your consent for TFL to process any personal data that you provide.

Trees for Life is grateful for the continued support of:



"very inspirational, heart opening, informative and soul restoring."

Abbie, Brighton



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