



Trees for Life

Annual Review 2019-20

Thank you to everyone who supported rewilding in the Scottish Highlands.

This is our annual review covering the period from 1 February 2019 to 31 January 2020. See our highlights and biggest achievements in the year and our plans for the future. We have also included our annual financial breakdown, so you can see how we raise income and where it is spent.

This year we made great progress on the Dundreggan Rewilding Centre, created a new look for Trees for Life, developed partnership projects East West Wild and Caledonian Pinewood Recovery, created large areas of woodland, founded the Scottish Rewilding Alliance, worked with hundreds of volunteers and engaged the local community.

Highlights and Achievements

Dundreggan Rewilding Centre

Progress on the world's first rewilding centre at Dundreggan moved quickly early in the year. We secured £2m in funding for the centre from the Natural and Cultural Heritage fund, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other funding. The centre is expected to open in 2022 and welcome over 50,000 visitors annually.

A new look for Trees for Life

We developed a fresh new website and brand. Our hope is that these improvements will engage more people with our mission to rewild the Scottish Highlands.

Rewilding Carn na Caorach

With support from the Biodiversity Challenge Fund we were able to erect a fence to secure a new planting area at Dundreggan – Carn na Caorach. At 700 acres it is our biggest enclosure yet. Trees will be planted on Carn na Caorach at a height between 450 and 600 meters above sea level. We intend to turn this area into a rich wild forest.

Scottish Rewilding Alliance

We are founder members of the Scottish Rewilding Alliance and our CEO launched it in September at the Big Picture Conference. Trees for Life is one of over twenty members of the Alliance who are working to change the way people think about nature as well as enabling more rewilding to happen. It is our hope that the Scottish Rewilding Alliance will enable us to achieve much greater impact by mainstreaming rewilding.

One million seeds for the future

We celebrated collecting 1,012,231 seeds from the northwest Highlands of Scotland as part of a national project to protect the UK's trees. These seeds will be stored safely in the vaults of the Kew Gardens Millennium Seed Bank.

Caledonian Pinewood Recovery

This project goes from strength to strength. To date we have increased our knowledge of the health of pinewoods across Scotland; network of contacts of people working in rural land management and understanding about the constraints and opportunities that owners and managers of pinewoods are working under.

Community engagement

Early in the year we hired a Katherine Murphy to expand our community engagement work. Since her appointment we have been able to do more with people to introduce them to nature. This includes hosting primary pupils from Kilchuimen Primary School to come to Dundreggan, creating an interactive experience at Belladrum festival, hosting summer and winter family days at Dundreggan with Feis Rois and Eden Court actors and several other events.

Working with volunteers

Hundreds of volunteers helped to grow and plant trees at Dundreggan and Glen Affric, among many other challenging and rewarding tasks. As well as rewilding the Highlands, volunteers also 'rewild' their own lives by getting closer to nature.

Together we collected seeds and grew them into wee trees on our nursery. We planted tens of thousands of trees at Dundreggan and Glen Affric. We repaired fences and removed non-native trees to allow these new forests to thrive. It would not have been possible without you, thank you all!



Share of £1m for tree planting and protection

We were delighted the Guardian selected us to be one of four beneficiaries of their Christmas appeal. Those who donated to the Guardian and Observer 2019 charity appeal raised over £1m to support tree planting and protection around the world. The donations will be spent on initiatives promoting social and climate justice through natural climate solutions and one quarter of the funds raised will support Trees for Life.



Looking to the future – Our plans for 2020/2021

The Dundreggan Rewilding Centre

Over the course of 2020 we hope to finalise our plans and raise vital funds for our proposed rewilding centre at Dundreggan. The rewilding centre will enable us to welcome a larger, more diverse audience to Dundreggan, making it the place where people come to discover a landscape restored after centuries of exploitation and leave inspired to engage with rewilding.

East West Wild Development

We aim to achieve buy-in from a significant group of landowners and stakeholders. Undertake a landscape assessment and socio-economic modelling, organise and deliver a consensus building process for East West Wild and officially launch the programme.

More red squirrels!

We aim to begin community and schools engagement in February and continue this throughout the year. We will begin translocation of red squirrels in the summer and hope to create several new populations in the North and West of Scotland by the end of the year.

Woodland creation

Thousands of trees are due to be planted in our Beinn Bhan enclosure at Dundreggan. This site of new high-altitude forest will include over 10,000 rare mountain trees and support wildlife including golden eagles and mountain hares. We will also return to Glen Affric in the spring to continue expanding and enriching the forest.

Specialisations on the nursery

We have expanded the potential on our nursery so we can now grow thousands of rare and hard to propagate montane trees each year. This included developing new lines of willow trees, developing our Twinflower project, and working with partners Patsy Wood, Kew Millennium Seed Bank and Cairngorms Nursery.

Volunteers and trainees

2020 will be the last year of our Skills for Rewilding programme, welcoming in our final five trainees. We will be working on plans to see how we may extend this project in the future. We will also be running Conservation Weeks to take hundreds of volunteers into the forest.



Finances

Finances 1 February 2019 – 31 January 2020

A look at how Trees for Life invested in rewilding this year. Our income has very significantly exceeded our expenditure this year. This is because we are actively raising for funds for ambitious new projects such as the rewilding centre and these funds will be spent when these new projects begin to happen.

These income and expenditure figures were extracted from the draft accounts prepared for audit for the year ended 31 January 2020. Full audited and unqualified accounts can be obtained from Companies House or by applying to our head office. Figures rounded to the nearest £250.

Income

Individual supporters £604,500

We have more than 2000 supporters who give regularly from around the world and many hundreds of other supporters who show their care for the future of the wild forest in Scotland through generous donations. Thank you!

Trusts and foundations £704,500

Grant givers continue to support our volunteer conservation weeks, red squirrel translocations, our nursery and trainee programme.

Companies £412,000

Many companies are helping to bring back the wild forest through general donations, sponsorship and tree planting.

Products £991,250

There are many different ways in which people from all walks of life and locations can help to restore and celebrate the Caledonian Forest from planting a tree to buying a wall calendar.

Other income £293,500

We are grateful to those who are able to GiftAid their donations and to those who remembered us in their will. This income enables us to do more for Scotland's wild forest.

Total Income £3,006,000.00

Expenditure

Supporting volunteers and trainees £205,000

People from all walks of life are helping the wild forest to grow and developing their rewilding skills at the same time. We couldn't do it without you!

Rewilding Dundreggan £257,000

Dundreggan is our flagship project where we're returning rare woodland wildlife, plants and insects and conducting scientific research, education programmes, community outreach and traineeships within 10,000 acres of the Scottish Highlands.

Propagating the forest £234,250

We grow around 60,000 native trees per year at our tree nursery. Scots pine, oak, birch, rowan, aspen and willow to name but a few.

Restoring the forest £175,750

Our wider conservation efforts are recreating wilderness in some of the most remote and beautiful parts of the Highlands, such as Glen Affric.

Generating income £282,500

This includes our work to enable supporters to help save the Caledonian Forest and it's wildlife through donations, appeals, merchandise and applications for grant-funding.

Total Expenditure £1,154,500