

Conservation Update

So two months on from my last round up all our work and with 2021 fast approaching I thought I'd give you another round up of what you've achieved since the end of October on the conservation front and what's coming up.

Leaves, leaves and more leaves

Let's be honest it has been the season for raking, sweeping and raking some more up and down the length of the walkway. With thousands of leaves falling and getting trampled into mush by the multitude of walkway users. It was great to have willing volunteers regularly coming out as there was a satisfying difference to be seen every time we finished a section and plenty of gratitude from the locals. I'm aware it's can be one of the most physical tasks we do, but it's also essential as without the leaves less puddles form, people stay on the walkway and don't trample the edges destroying the vegetation and causing even bigger muddy messes



Meadows

It feels like ages ago to me, however at the start of November we were playing catch up with our meadow care and were in the final stages of doing a second cut of Bell's, Bog, Balerno and Juniper Green meadows. Having had the cuttings raked off to help to keep the soil fertility low, we sowed new seeds into them and planted bulbs as well so watch out for a colourful start to spring up and down the walkway.



Resurfacing



In the last two months we've moved 6 tones worth of new surfacing onto the walkway by hand to improve parts at Currie, Ford's Road and Juniper Green. In the New Year we will add more at Juniper Green and upstream of Anderson Place.



Redbraes

Celebrations a plenty as the council have fixed the drain in the tunnel which is now working fully and hopefully no more massive puddles in that section. Willow and hazel has been coppiced from the far bank and topping up of the fencing has begun

Boat Clean Ups in Leith

Since October we've been out twice to clear plastic waste from the Leith Basin and are due out on the 7th of Jan for the next session. At the same time as removing litter we are looking at the feasibility of the Trust getting involved in controlling shrubs that are breaking the walls.



Staff Outings

Charlotte got to help Forth River Trust to rescue fish from the portadam that Scottish Water installed to stop siltation of the river whilst they upgrade the combined sewage overflow works. Whilst Johnny completed his Lantra Brushcutter and trimmer certification so watch this space in the new year for refresher training opportunities



Green Gym Partnership

Through Johnny's contacts we've started a partnership with the ladies section from Broughton Rugby Club to do a monthly Green Gym conservation session. This is as a way of helping them stay fit and social whilst rugby games aren't possible due to covid. The club is very active locally and recently dragged Johnny on an 18 mile run where they ran to every ladies rugby team in Edinburgh. To date they have given Steadfast gate a beautification and got involved with clearing leaves in the Dells and at Leith.



Coming Up in 2021

Trees, trees and more Trees

We are aiming to plant lots of new trees along the walkway by April to enrich the walkway and have habitat for future generations of wildlife. There are a variety of sites we will be enriching including removing and replacing snowberry (invasive species from USA) at Bonnington, planting the banks at West Bowling Green Street having removed fields of Himalyan Balsam, behind Donaldson College to protect the soakaway from mud and other smaller targeted planting areas.

Clearing Up after the Thundersnow

Once water levels drop we'll be back into the river with waders on to remove the masses of wet wipes, plastic bags and other litter that has coated the banking after the surge of water from the Thundersnow.



Repeat 2019

We've done some brilliant work in 2020 even though it's been a stop start year. To date at the end of Nov we'd done 2418 hours of conservation hours to enhance and protect the walkway and river which based on living wage would have cost £22,500 to have paid someone to do. In the last financial year though we did 6816 hours which if done would have cost £63,500 so hopefully we'll catch up on some of that work load in the remaining three months.

Online River Patrol Training

Do you enjoy regular walks along the river, would you like to share your observations and help the protection and enhancement of it ? Then become a river patroller.

Johnny will be running a monthly training session to become a River Patroller and help you target your observations to let us know of problems before they become too big from trees in the river, muddy sections, signs of pollution, wildlife sightings and users of the walkway.

The first training will be on Wednesday the 20th between 6pm and 7pm on Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86038931691> . Please confirm if you will be attending via email.

Training Opportunities via TCV (The Conservation Volunteers)

Online 'Zoom' sessions:

[Wildlife Gardening](#), 21 December, 3-4pm. Hosted by Froglife. Due to funding arrangements this course is aimed at people living in the Forth Valley. Free. Details [here](#)

[Winter Tree Identification](#), 21 January, 7-8.30pm, Details [here](#)

[Scotland's Arboreal Heritage: History and Culture through Treescapes](#), 26 January, 6-7pm. Free. Details [here](#)

[Phase 1 Habitat Survey Techniques](#), 16 February, 10am - 4.30pm. Details [here](#)

[Introduction to Bird Song](#), 30 March, 7-8.30pm. Free. Details [here](#)