



Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland Bulletin April 2021

Welcome to the OWL Scotland bulletin. If you have items for inclusion in the bulletin please send them to Bonnie.Maggio@forestry.gov.scot

OWL Scotland National News Update

With Covid restrictions lifting and spring bursting forth we are exciting about upcoming projects and getting outdoors for group activities again.

Many of the OWL groups will be running play schemes over the coming months to help with recovery for young people from the effects of Covid restrictions and we are looking forward to visiting some of them.

Postponed CPD training is being rescheduled around the network so keep in contact with your local group for details.

Date for your Diaries - We are planning another summer Networking Event which will be held in Falkland the weekend of the 10th September. Watch this space for further information.

Enjoy the beautiful spring weather!

Covid 19 Guidance Update

Here is an update on what is happening as regards outdoor learning and moving forwards with Covid 19. We have been asked about OWL Scotland's policies on moving forward after lockdown and would like to reiterate that groups should follow Scottish Government guidance at all times.

All the Scottish Government documents are online here: <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Guidance on school trips and visits

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-school-visits-and-trips/>



COP26, children/ young people and trees/ forests

Please let us know of any local or national projects you are aware of which are looking to engage children and young people with tree planting /woodland creation/ urban regeneration type programmes

There are a couple that we are aware of:

The Lost Woods [Home](#) | [The Lost Woods](#)

The Clyde Climate Forest [The Clyde Climate Forest - GCV Green Network](#) and

The Youth Forest for Scotland [Introducing Scotland's Young People's Forest - Young Scot Corporate](#)

Working with Trees and Timber – a toolkit for forestry careers

Working with Trees And Timber has been developed for anyone in the industry who has been asked to speak to young people about careers in forestry. It signposts and provides easy access to the wide range of resources that have been created to promote the sector and which could be used or adapted in a variety of settings.

Local OWL Events and News:

Argyll and Bute OWL Group

The group ran a successful Outdoor First Aid course.
The next meeting Tuesday 25th May online.
Email argyllowlgroup@gmail.com

Greater Glasgow OWL Group (GROWL)



We've been busy running a series of successful online events funded by the OWLS special COVID grant, which have been surprisingly popular, even having attendees from Estonia and Germany! These events have included monthly Outdoor Practitioner Surgeries, Book Sharing Sessions and highly popular skill share workshops including 'What's in My Rucksack' and 'Tying swings, hammocks, tree ladders and ridge lines' (38 participants).

On 14 May, we have the last of these sessions where Aline Hill will be guiding us through the latest Forest School qualifications.

We hope to launch our lending library, based at the Botanic, in Autumn 2021 and to run some of the delayed networking events we had planned for 2020.

Julia Harriman
GROWL Coordinator

North East OWL Group

Two day Drystone Dyking Course on Sat 29th & Sun 30th May at Crathes Castle delivered by Steve Denham in partnership with NTS and ADAP South Forum.

Dumfries and Galloway OWL Group

OWL Scotland generously supported DGOWL with a grant to get children playing outdoors to help them recover from lockdown. 12 children have already enjoyed two full days of play in the beautiful Cally Woods. After months not seeing anyone except their families, the children were initially very nervous, but quickly got up to speed and loved playing games from Yoga Tip to Eagle Eye, making a fire and being creative - from elder bead necklaces to fairy furniture. Thanks To OWL Scotland for their support in making this happen.

Dumfries and Galloway Outdoor and Woodland Learning Group
Check us out on Facebook @OWLDG and Twitter @DGOWLGP

South Highland OWL Group

All our planned 2021 CPD workshops are postponed again due to the continued COVID restrictions.

Programme for Spring/Summer

Saturday CPD workshops

The South Highland Outdoor & Woodland Learning (OWL) Group exists to support outdoor learning across the southern half of the Highlands. This group is for outdoor learning practitioners, teachers, early years' practitioners and anyone with an interest in outdoor learning. All workshops are **FREE** and count for **CPD** time for teachers.

1. Gaelic in the woods. Learn about how to engage children in woodlands through the gaelic language @ Strathspey.
2. Woodland beastie hunt & Wild Challenge. By Sarah Walker, RSPB. March 2021 @ Strathspey.
4. Slipper felting in the woods with Abriachan Forest Trust. April 2021 @ Abriachan.
4. Citizen science using biological recording in the woods by Emily Brown, Science Development Officer
6. Natural dyeing with Christine Matheson @ Abriachan.
7. Story telling in the woods with Creeping Toad @ Inverness.

West Fife OWL Group

West Fife OWL held it's virtual AGM on 16 March and is looking forward to becoming more active with the lifting of restrictions. We have been awarded a Special Play Project grant to run 5 sessions in which we aim to assist children with getting back to nature and socialising in groups outdoors. This has also given us an opportunity to purchase more outdoor kit which will be added to the resources listed below. Hopefully more on that in the next bulletin.

We also have a new Facebook page, Outdoor and Woodland Learning-West Fife, which will be used to enhance our online presence and hopefully attract new members.

West Fife OWL Group have 3 different resource kits which are available to borrow. Each kit contains enough materials for a class of up to 30 pupils and can be loaned out for an initial period of two weeks. One of our committee members has kindly offered to drop off and collect kits.
Den building Kit: contains a selection of tarpaulins, rope, string, bungees, tent pegs, clothes pegs-add some trees and you have everything you need for a team building challenge.
Fire Kit: contains a folding portable fire pit, Kelly Kettle, Fire steels, water container, fire blanket, fire proof gloves and first aid kit.

Pond Dipping Kit: contains 6 white plastic specimen trays, 6 long handled nets, a selection of pots to allow children to observe pond life in close-up and FSC Freshwater identification guides. Can also be used in shallow streams and rock pools.

To borrow a kit, please email the group on westfifeowl@gmail.com giving your name, School, kit(s) wanted and date required.

Edinburgh

2021 EOWL Winter /Spring online CPD programme

The EOWL Winter / Spring CPD programme was a delight and we had a steady up-take at each of the CPD sessions to keep us going through January to March 2021. Members came from far and wide across other Scottish OWL groups as well as regulars from EOWL. Each of the Saturday events had a Scottish Tree theme where we learnt about winter tree I.D., uses of each species and associated folklore, history and habitats.

Setting us off to a snowy start was Sara's *Birch and Winter Tree Twig Garlands* to celebrate Imbolc followed by *Drawing with Nature, Painting with Plants: Foraging for Colour - Plants, Pigments and Paints* with Barbara through February. Karolina freshened things up with her *Natural Soap Making* and Jane shared some lovely *Woodland Lore and Storytelling techniques* for all. We were delighted that Anna completed the first of this year's EOWL CPD's with her excellent *Foraging and Natural Remedies* session. Jill and Donald will be offering a CPD later in the season on *Beach School and Marine Life*. These online dates were different types of gatherings, for sure, but very sociable, informative and informal none-the-less. Attendees commented how they felt, "happy and relaxed" to be at the sessions with, "improved wellbeing" which had, "helped to give new skills for themselves and others in their own settings."

The CPD sessions have certainly set us up for the year ahead and given much food for thought and we long to meet up outdoors again. I'd like to congratulate the CPD Leaders for sharing some of their many talents and skills and adapting admirably to the tech. Continued thanks to Rosy and Roy for their behind-the-scenes support.

Spring / Summer and plans into Autumn

Edinburgh Outdoor Woodland Playschemes will be run in July and Jill and Sara can give more feedback in the next few months.

We've pickup up the planning for our 'blended' annual, *Nature Play Conference* again, in partnership with City of Edinburgh Council, for Autumn 2021 and hope some of this can take place outdoors together. Re-establishing further networking and CPD opportunities with other OWL groups is ongoing - it's been good to skill share with kindred spirits.

Cop 26 is also in our sights! Watch this space for more info. Our Monday evening, Campfire Choir songs will be growing towards the happening events in October 2021.

Wishing everyone all good things 😊 Barbara Middleton (EOWL Chair)



Woodland Lore & Storytelling
Enrich your storytelling making connections to nature

Edinburgh Outdoor Learning - EOWL On-line CPD
Saturday March 13th (11.00-12.30) with Jane Mather

To share the art of storytelling and outdoor activities.
To promote the enjoyment of outdoors through storytelling and other activities.
Book Now on Eventbrite: £5 & Donations gratefully received. CPD and its delivery on the 13th 2020



Tayside OWL Group



Nature's Little Wonders has been created by Tayside OWLS committee member Lisa Henry to provide forest playgroups for children aged 5 and under, in North East Fife. The first session took place in the first week of February at Bishop's Wood near Strathkinness. It was apparent that this was a very well needed activity for families at that difficult time, amid the winter lockdown. One Facebook post was made on a local nursery's Facebook page and since then, awareness has been mainly word of mouth and the group is generating lots of enthusiasm! Since Covid number restrictions have eased, the playgroups have been taking place at Tentsmuir National Park to accommodate the larger group sizes. It has been wonderful to see the benefits in both the children and the adults and in particular, the younger toddlers develop in their confidence as for a lot of them, before attending Nature Little Wonders, had never experienced a playgroup or a group activity before. Activities have included building mini dens, making bird feeders, making stick men and for Good Friday, decorating eggs and egg rolling! The children have also been creating their own games involving pulling each other up slopes with sticks, inspecting logs and rolling down the hills. Exciting plans are also underway for the development of this provision, so watch this space!

Playgroup sessions take place on a Friday morning from 10 am – 12 pm. For more information please visit the Nature's Little Wonders website: www.natureslittlewonders.org

Resources and Funding

Outdoor Education Recovery Fund

YouthLink Scotland is delighted to announce that the £500,000 Outdoor Education Recovery Fund is now open for applications. The aim of the fund is to support outdoor education specialists to deliver outdoor learning in partnership with school or other formal education settings. This is a Scottish Government fund, administered by YouthLink Scotland.

The fund is open to organisations that:

- Are located in Scotland;
- Operate in the third sector or private sector;
- Routinely provide curricular relevant outdoor learning opportunities for young people aged 3 – 18; and
- Are applying in partnership with one or more formal education establishment such as a nursery, school or college

The deadline for applications is Friday the 14th of May 2021

Full guidance and the link to the online application form is available [here](#)

For further information or help with your application form, please register for one of the applicant support sessions (see Guidance for Applicants for details) or contact me directly using the contact information below.

LTL - Local Schools Nature Grants

I am pleased to announce that our Local Schools Nature Grants are open for applications.

The grants provide an assortment of nature equipment up to the value of £500 and a two hour training session. The packages are customisable, enabling early years settings, Infant, Primary and Secondary schools to choose from a menu of items which best suit their learners and their setting.

All schools and early years settings in England, Scotland and Wales are welcome to apply.

We are offering 625 grants and a wider mix of products and training to appeal to an even broader range of ages.

You can read more and make an application at <https://www.ltl.org.uk/projects/local-school-nature-grants/>

Refreshed curriculum narrative for Curriculum for Excellence:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/resources-to-support-the-refreshed-curriculum-for-excellence-narrative/>

SAPOE supporting learning outdoors resource

An interactive presentation about Supporting Learning Outdoors is now available in the Resources section of the website and on the News page: <https://www.sapoe.org.uk/resources/supporting-learning-outdoors-interactive-presentation/>

Finding greenspace for outdoor learning just got a whole lot easier

The [Greenspace Map for Outdoor Learning](#) has been developed by NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage), in collaboration with Ordnance Survey and Esri UK, and allows teachers, educators and others to quickly identify greenspaces close to their education establishment that may provide outdoor learning potential. This new resource complements our [Beyond Your Boundary: easy steps to learning in local greenspace resource and associated Professional Learning](#)

Training

The Outdoor Teacher

The Outdoor Teacher is providing professional online training, 'Forest School Activities online course' with over 100 videos and resources to support outdoor practice and pedagogy. Here is a link to the free course: : <https://theoutdoorteacher.com/p/forest-school-activities-free-mini-course>

Other news

Check out the latest Outdoor Learning news from Scotland

Have a look at [Outdoor Learning Directory news page](#), where you'll find fresh updates, including news and resources from the Learning in Local Greenspace project.
<http://outdoorlearningdirectory.com/index.php/news/>

Contact:

To contact your local OWL group please go to the [OWL Scotland website](#)

Or contact us:

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