

**Outdoor &
Woodland
Learning**
SCOTLAND



ROOT & BRANCH

Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland Bulletin

WINTER 2014



Featuring outdoor and woodland learning and Forest School news

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Root & Branch bulletin Winter 2014!

This bulletin aims to update our members in Scotland on news, projects and initiatives related to outdoor and woodland learning. These bulletins will remain available on the OWL Scotland website.

OWL SCOTLAND NEWS

Contact: Bonnie Maggio OWL Scotland Manager E: bonnie.maggio@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland is the new name for the organisation that has evolved out of the Forest Education Initiative (FEI) which was started over 20 years ago. Outdoor and Woodland Learning Scotland is dedicated to increasing the use of Scotland's outdoor environments for learning, by linking together practitioners at a local level. OWLS draws inspiration, expertise and resources from a range of partners, leaders and educators.

Aim

OWL Scotland aims to increase the opportunities for learning outdoors.

Objectives

Provide First hand learning experience

Increase the use of outdoors for exploring and discovery for learning
Using learning outdoors to help to develop a sense of place and belonging and develop a deep connection to the natural world

Increasing knowledge, skills and understanding of outdoor environments,

Increase opportunities for adults to learn and develop pedagogical skills for use outdoors
By using a range of outdoor environments encourage depth, breadth and progression in learning, including practical skills

Learning for Sustainability

Increase opportunities to learn about the natural world and how it links to social and economic factors locally, in Scotland and globally, by going outside.

Health and Wellbeing

To increase recognition of the way that learning outdoors impacts positively on health and wellbeing.

How does OWLS work?

OWLS is supported by Forestry Commission Scotland and operates through local OWL groups throughout Scotland. These groups involve people working locally to increase the use of Scotland's outdoor environment for learning and include teachers, rangers, NGO's and government organisations.

What does OWLS do?

Nationally OWL Scotland supports outdoor and woodland learning through grants, provision of resources, advice, training and networking opportunities.

National & local networks

Keep in touch with the world of OWL Scotland by checking the [news](#) page of the website.

OWL local group news

FEI Cluster groups are invited to reconstitute themselves as OWL groups. Full information has been sent to all cluster groups along with information on the grants available this year for the transition. Several groups have already become OWL groups and the first applications for grants are coming in. Local OWL Groups will be receiving a start-up pack with leaflets, T-shirts, Sweatshirts etc. and more will follow in the New Year. Also included will be a pen drive with all the logos, forms and guidance on grants.

OWL Scotland Banners are also available for groups to borrow for events. Contact the [OWL Scotland Manager](#) if you would like one.

Are you a member of your [local OWL group](#)? [Subscribe](#) to receive the OWL Scotland bulletin.

Launch of OWL Scotland

The official launch of Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland will take place in March 2015. Full details to follow.

TRAINING and NETWORKING EVENTS

Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland National Networking Events

OWL Scotland held a national networking event this year to celebrate the new organisation. 3/4 October 2014 at Falkland Centre for Stewardship, Fife. The full [event evaluation](#) is available on the website.

Tree Stories CPD

We are running a series of free CPD courses to support the use of the new Tree Stories resource. There will be 2 remaining courses run as follows:

Sat 17th January at Vogrie Country Park 10am start.
Date to be confirmed January or February 2015 at Aberfoyle.

For a booking form and full information look [here](#).

RESOURCES

[Subscribe](#) to get up to date information or explore the [resources](#) section of the website.

OWL Facebook snippets

Recent threads include:

- ideas for litter-free outdoor snacks that don't require a fire to cook
- dynamic risk assessment
- how to clean out kelly kettles
- freelance vs secure jobs
- benefits of mud play.....and more

Why not join the [OWL Facebook group](#), and share your good ideas or questions?

GRANTS

We have redesigned the grants for local OWL groups this year and they comprise a series of small, easy to apply for grants to enable launch events, training courses, admin for the groups, and a special Pine Grant for school projects relating to scots pine. For further information contact [your local OWL group](#).

AWARDS

Scotland's Finest Woods Awards 2015

Is your school or a school you work with undertaking a project based on forestry or woodlands? Could you be a winner? Why not apply for Scotland's Finest Woods Awards 2015 – Schools Award? Great prizes to be won.

For further information go to www.sfwa.org

OWL Scotland FOREST SCHOOL NEWS

Contact: Penny Martin OWL Forest School Coordinator Scotland

E: forestschoolcoordinator@livingclassrooms.org.uk

Forest School Scotland Co-ordinator post to end

This post is coming to an end December 2014, after 4 busy years. The post has been supported since 2010 thanks to Forests for People (F4P) funding followed by Forestry Development Programme (FDP) funding. A big 'THANK YOU' to Living Classrooms, the charitable arm of Mindstretchers Ltd., for hosting this post!

Over this time, Penny has been kept busy dealing with enquiries, promoting Forest School and developing contacts and resources. She has aimed to get the Forest School resources on the OWL Scotland website in place and a good network established so that Forest School can continue to be supported in Scotland.

Thanks to all those who are part of the energetic and inspiring network across Scotland. May Forest School continue to enhance the lives of those who take part in its programmes!

Are you on the Forest School Scotland database?

When the Forest School Scotland post is closed, the FS Scotland database will be held by OWL Scotland to maintain. If you do not wish your details to be passed on, please contact the [Forest School Scotland Coordinator](#) before 17 December 2014, or thereafter the [OWL Scotland Manager](#).

Forest School & Curriculum for Excellence Focus Group

Following a call-out to teacher Forest School practitioners across Scotland, this group met at the end of October 2014. We discussed what type and format of resource would be most useful. It was agreed that a key focus should be how Forest School can support the health & wellbeing aspects of the curriculum, but additional links should also consider literacy and numeracy. These are the experiences and outcomes which are the responsibility of all practitioners. The group agreed that a poster which summarises the wellbeing indicators and signposts to additional resources was the most accessible and user friendly format.

Many thanks to all the teachers involved – they will be credited on the resource, which is currently being compiled. Watch out for news of this on the OWL Scotland website!

The growing Forest School Scotland network

An updated [map](#) of Forest School practitioners, trainers and trainees is now available on the OWL Scotland website, based on 184 contacts listed on the Forest School Scotland database. This shows locations (but not contact details of) Forest School training providers, levels 1-3 qualified practitioners, and those still in training across Scotland within each local authority area. If you are a Forest School trainee or qualified practitioner and have not yet submitted your details, please get in touch with the [OWL Scotland Manager](#). Being on the database ensures you will be kept in the Forest School loop in Scotland!

Please note the Forest School Association has a [searchable FSA members' map](#), showing members across the UK. The location points include contact details - useful for freelancers and training providers amongst others who would like to promote their practice.

The Forest School qualification

South of the border, the Forest School qualification is available on the Qualifications and Credit Framework for England (QCF). The FSA is the gatekeeper for three qualifications (levels 1, 2 & 3) developed in partnership with Open College Network West Midlands Region (OCNWMR) and the GB Forest School Trainers Network. Further information is available [here](#). One of our aims in Scotland was to explore whether it was possible to get the Forest School qualification credit rated on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, and indeed, whether this was desirable. Currently, one training provider in Scotland delivers the OCN WMR course, while the remaining training providers in Scotland are linked with OCN North East Region (OCN NER), now known as [ONE Awards](#). A unified approach has not yet proved possible, but with outdoor learning evolving rapidly in Scotland, a credit rated Forest School or similar course(s) in Scotland may prove feasible in future....Watch this space!

Professional recognition – the way forward?

The GTCS revised professional standards which include [learning for sustainability](#) are likely raise the value placed on outdoor learning programmes like Forest School, and result in more and better outdoor practice. Congratulations to Linda Murray, a teacher at St Peter's primary School in the Scottish Borders and Forest School practitioner, who now has professional recognition in outdoor learning through Forest School! Are there any other examples out there?

Keeping it going.....the Forest School Association



As the UK membership body, the FSA can provide guidance to all Forest School practitioners, particularly in terms of maintaining standards in practice and network support. Check the [FSA website](#) for UK Forest School related news.

One important piece of work in progress is the review and updating of the Forest School Quality Improvement Framework (FS QuIF).

FSA members have also been told about The Love Trees Love Wood campaign which is raising money for Forest Schools. It is being run by Sylva Foundation and Forest School Association in partnership. Their [video](#) explains more.

Staying connected

Subscribe [here](#) to the OWL Scotland newsletter and other updates – just add your name and email contact details.

Join the OWL Scotland (OWL SCOTLAND) [Facebook group](#) –it shares lots of lively discussion and useful exchanges of information!

OTHER NEWS

Forestry Career Route Map

A new route map [webpage](#) has been developed to help you navigate your way through career options in Scotland's trees and forestry industry.

Learn about our non-native species – a free online resource

The SNH July e-bulletin described how a [free online training package](#) has been developed for people who want to learn how to identify and record non-native species. After completing the five modules in the package you will receive a certificate that can be downloaded and printed. To subscribe to the SNH e-newsletter simply follow this [link](#)

Working with Scotland's Communities - A survey of who does community learning and development (CLD) in Scotland

[Education Scotland](#) is working with community partners to develop a national survey to find out more about who currently delivers CLD in Scotland, and will be looking for your help in completing this important piece of work in early 2015.

The survey will aim to build a more reliable picture of CLD across all sectors. The first phase of this project will be aimed at organisations. A survey collating individual responses will take place in the future. To receive future emails about the survey from the Education Scotland CLD team [sign-up online](#)

Do you know a piece of land you would love to use for your outdoor learning - if it wasn't for the litter.....?

The following item is from the [Eco-Schools October bulletin](#)....."Report a Grot Spot"
Do you know an area that could be lovely but has been forgotten? Different groups are always looking for areas where they can help out, but Eco-schools need your help to identify areas across the country that would benefit from a Clean Up by these groups. All the details about how to report a grot spot can be found at www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/grotspot

Grow Wild

Grow Wild has 120,000 free seed kits up for grabs. Register on behalf of your group/s by filling in Grow Wild's simple two-minute form [here](#) Registration closes at midnight on 14 February 2015 and the kits will be sent out in late March in time for spring sowing. Group leaders who received spring 2014 kits can register again for spring 2015 kits.

Plus! Grow Wild is awarding funding of £1,000 to £4,000 to community groups that want to bring people together to transform a communal space by sowing and growing UK native plants. You can read the application guidance [here](#). Deadline for applications is 2 December 2014. Any questions contact Claire Bennett, Scotland Partnership Manager by [email](#).

SCQF conference: An Unexpected Journey. Thursday 19 February 2015, Radisson Blu Hotel, Glasgow

If you are involved in lifelong learning in any way, are you interested in attending a conference exploring the past, present and future of the SCQF in Scotland and beyond? This unique event will be a special one for the SCQF Partnership as it will celebrate the journey the Framework has taken since its inception in 2001. It will also showcase all aspects of the Framework demonstrating its breadth and flexibility as a tool to facilitate lifelong learning in Scotland.

You will have the opportunity to hear from a wide range of prominent speakers on issues relating to lifelong learning in Scotland and there will be the chance to attend a variety of engaging workshops showcasing the many ways in which the SCQF is supporting learners

More information can be found in this [link](#) where you can register to attend.

The Consultation for Scotland's Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations December 2014

The Scottish Government consultation on Adventure Activities Licensing in 2012 found that there was a case for retaining licensing in Scotland. Further to that Scottish Government decided to commission the Scottish Adventure Activities Forum (SAAF) in 2014 to determine exactly what shape this should take to suit the Scottish context. If you have a stake in this and would like to be involved:

An online survey will be available from 10th December 2014 until 9th January 2015. The survey can be accessed at [SAAF Adventure Activities Licensing survey 2014](#)

A Briefing Paper is also available at [SAAF Adventures Activities Consultation Briefing Paper](#)

JOBS & VOLUNTEERING

Exciting job opportunities at Stramash outdoor nurseries!

Stramash Outdoor Nurseries have a range of jobs available in Oban and Fort William including apprenticeships, practitioner, senior practitioner and nursery manager positions. For more details visit the [Stramash blog](#) pages.

OTHER NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

It's Our World

Anyone aged 4 – 19 years is invited to put themselves on the map by creating an artwork to celebrate where they live and uploading it onto the It's Our World Gallery. The aim is to create the UK's largest online collection of artwork mapping the British Isles, as seen through the eyes of the nation's future custodians. The uploaded artwork will be showcased in June 2015 on digital ad screens across the UK. It's Our World is mostly being driven through schools and colleges and has been developed to support the national primary and secondary curricula. Outdoor learning is one of the key approaches suggested to explore this sustainability theme. For more information and how to register, visit [It's Our World](#)

CUTTINGS

HSE publishes schools sensible risk web pages

Are you responsible for managing health and safety in a school? To help you strike the right balance in managing the real risks, HSE has published new, straightforward guidance which highlights common health and safety myths, advises on a sensible and proportionate approach, and clarifies which activities are covered by health and safety law. This [web-based guidance](#) is designed to support school leaders to strike the right balance and encourage them to avoid being risk averse.

Outdoor & woodland learning practitioners might find some of the related content on these pages useful, including [Risk education](#). This underlines the need for experiential learning and the value in working with children outdoors to assess hazard and risk in programmes such as Forest School.

OTHER FUNDING

Greenspace Scotland provides useful information on [funding sources](#)

SPOTLIGHT

Fungi – goodies (and baddies)

It's been a great autumn for fungi out in the woods. Woodlands TV offers useful video clips on wild mushroom foraging and identification, both on [edible Russula species](#), and some also to enjoy but definitely avoid.

There are also useful items on [Foraging for Wild Food](#)

Have a happy Festive break!



Do you have an OWL Scotland local group, woodland learning or Forest School project you would like highlighted in the next newsletter? If so, do get in touch with the OWL Scotland Manager!

Expect the next

The logo for OWL Scotland bulletin features the letters 'OWL' in a large, bold, black font. The 'O' is a stylized sun with rays. The 'W' is a simple block letter. The 'L' is a simple block letter. To the right of 'OWL' is the word 'Scotland' in a smaller, black, serif font. To the right of 'Scotland' is the word 'bulletin' in a smaller, black, serif font. The 'i' in 'bulletin' has a small star above it.

Spring 2015

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