

World's first rewilding centre opens near Loch Ness

Friday 14 April, 2023

The world's first rewilding centre has been opened near Loch Ness in the Scottish Highlands by charity Trees for Life – showcasing how large-scale nature recovery can give people inspiring experiences, create jobs and benefit rural communities.

The Dundreggan Rewilding Centre in Glenmoriston celebrates rewilding and the region's rich Gaelic culture, and offers a gateway for visitors to explore the 10,000-acre Dundreggan estate, where Trees for Life is restoring the Caledonian forest and its wildlife.

"For 15 years, Dundreggan has been a beacon for rewilding our landscapes. Now it will be a beacon for rewilding people too," said Steve Micklewright, Trees for Life's Chief Executive.

"This is a place of hope. We want to breathe life into the huge potential of the Highlands to help nature return in a major way – providing people from all walks of life with fantastic experiences while supporting re-planting, boosting social and economic opportunities, and tackling the climate and nature emergencies."

The centre, eight miles from Loch Ness on the main road (A887) to the Isle of Skye, opens its doors fully to the public on Saturday 15 April with a celebratory weekend of special events and activities.

Developed in consultation with the local community, the free-to-access centre has been made possible thanks to the generous support of major funders.

Visitors, families, schools and those with specific needs will be able to enjoy year-round events and experiences, discover how rewilding benefits wildlife such as golden eagles, red squirrels and wood ants, and learn about Gaelic culture and its deep connections to the landscape.

The centre features a stunning tree sculpture of reclaimed metal, created by acclaimed artist Helen Denerley, and offers a gateway to the wild forest, with fully accessible trails, child-friendly forest experiences, and more adventurous walks. Displays in English and Gaelic introduce rewilding and the Gaelic language, and a storytelling bothy showcases local history and heritage.

A café and events space offer locally sourced food and drink and entertainment areas, while a purpose-built and accessible 40-bedroom accommodation building allows people to stay for longer experiences.

Twenty new jobs have already been created, employing local people, and the multi-million pound investment will generate an ongoing economic boost for local suppliers and services. The period of design and construction has already involved local businesses from architects to plumbers.

Laurelin Cummins-Fraser, Dundreggan Rewilding Centre Director, said: "Whether a visitor has just an hour for a quick visit or wants to stay with us for an immersive rewilding experience, our centre will welcome people to discover stunning landscapes, unique wildlife and Gaelic culture, while connecting with the wonders of the natural world.

"The Rewilding Centre is embedded in the landscape and the community. Its design is inspired by Gaelic heritage and history, and by the Caledonian forest – with verticals representing trees, changing light to reflect how light plays in woodlands, and materials and colours conjuring up bracken and forest bark. It's a really special place for people to enjoy."

Dundreggan is part of Affric Highlands, the UK's largest rewilding landscape which will potentially cover over 500,000 acres – restoring nature while strengthening land-based livelihoods and creating economic opportunities. Trees for Life launched the Affric Highlands initiative in 2021, in partnership with Rewilding Europe and an initial coalition of communities and landowners.

Funders of Dundreggan Rewilding Centre include the Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund, led by NatureScot and funded through the European Regional Development Fund; National Lottery Heritage Fund; Bòrd na Gàidhlig; Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Program; SSE Sustainable Development Fund; Audemars Piguet Foundation; Improving Public Access Fund; FERN Community Funds; Fort Augustus Community Council; Highlands & Islands Enterprise; and Garfield Weston Foundation.

Media:



Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits ::
Environment & Nature ::

Related Keywords:

Rewilding :: Nature :: Climate ::
Scotland :: Highlands :: Wildlife ::

Scan Me:



Individual donors and investment through the Triodos Bank crowdfunder platform contributed substantial funds.

For more details, see visitdundreggan.co.uk.

Company Contact:

Trees for Life

T. 07753 488146

E. richardbunting@gmail.com

W. <https://www.treesforlife.org.uk>

View Online

Additional Assets:

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:

<https://www.treesforlife.pressat.co.uk>