

# Dynamic Dunescapes Dune Engagement Case Study

## John Muir Award

<b>Sand dune system</b>	Cumbria Dunes
<b>Case Study Subject</b>	A tool for supporting site manager engagement and encouraging new audiences in the dunes
<b>The Engagement Intervention</b>	

### Site background information

Cumbrian dunes are home to rare and protected species, including the natterjack toad, northern dune tiger beetle and dune helleborine. Our Dunescapes sites are accessible to many small towns up and down the coastline, with a small number of schools within walking distance.

### What was the issue/change you hoped to make?

Encourage partner organisations to deliver engagement activities on the dunes, where previously little engagement had taken place before. Support a wider range of audiences and groups to learn about and embrace sand dunes.

### What was the suggested intervention?

It was part of the Cumbria action plan to develop school partnerships, deliver John Muir Awards and to train teachers and partner staff in delivery of engagement and learning activities on the dunes, to reach a wider, more inclusive audience.

### What did you do and how?

Nationally, the Dunescapes team collaboratively produced a John Muir Dune Discovery Award. This became a useful framework and tool for engaging with schools and groups.

We trained staff and partner staff to deliver the John Muir Award. Dunescapes resources were shared with the staff and staff had the chance to work as a group to share, learn and develop engagement techniques face to face with each other. This was a first for some.

A further online training course was also set up and delivered to teachers across Cumbria to encourage the use of dunes and the John Muir Award in their learning.

### Who did you work with? / How did you engage with different groups?

The training was delivered alongside John Muir Trust. Staff from Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Solway Coast AONB, National Trust and Wyre Council were involved. Primary, secondary and home education groups were also trained.

**How was the site / intervention monitored?**

Following the training, we corresponded with individuals who took part and offered individual support where needed.

**What modifications, if any, did you make to your initial plan and why?**

The face to face staff training was run at our office grounds away from the dunes, a central location for ease of access.

**Highlight any issues/obstacles & how you overcame them?**

**How much did the intervention cost?**

£550 inc VAT for 3 John Muir Award training sessions.

**What size was the area of the intervention?**

**Did the intervention work?**

**Please describe how. What has changed?**

A total of 32 people were trained, so far reaching over 100 people.

Having previously had little engagement experience, Natural England have gone on to support a pupil referral unit supporting their John Muir Award through regular sessions on the dunes. Cumbria Wildlife Trust have started delivering John Muir Award to an SEN school. Whilst not on dunes, it has formed a new relationship and way of working with this group for the Trust. National Trust are continuing to develop knowledge in engagement and working with young people through shadowing Dunescapes events, prior to contacting schools to run John Muir awards themselves. New secondary schools have been contacted through other partner staff and Wyre Council are continuing to plan/develop John Muir Award into their programme. 3 of the schools have started taking part in the John Muir Award since the training.

**External feedback**

*'Thank you both so much for your inspiring training about John Muir and Dunescapes. I am really looking forward to getting started with my class and I know they will love all the stages of the discovery award. The resources are of such high quality, I know they'll be invaluable in the classroom to get the children enthused.'*

**If the intervention has not worked, detail why not.**

There is continued need to support staff and teachers.

**What could be done differently next time?**

The teacher training was limited in numbers and delivered online to allow teachers from across the county to access it and to allow for any potential Covid restrictions. However, through feedback, there was perhaps a bit too much information shared and it would have been more engaging to run the sessions in person and on the dunes in a more localized context. This may have increased school uptake.

**Media & Reports**

**Published media**



Free John Muir  
Teacher Training Op

**Images of the intervention**



Staff training – john muir beard warm up activity!



Primary school awarded their john muir award certificates