



Newsletter

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Winter 10



Welcome

to the Winter 2010 newsletter for the Ayrshire Forest Cluster, to keep you updated on recent developments.

FOREST SCHOOL TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

We are delighted to announce that we have secured funding to run forest school training at both level 1 & level 3 for the first time in Ayrshire, at a discounted rate. This will enable up to 16 group members to be trained at level 3 and 16 teachers & nursery workers to be trained at level 1 in our desire to develop a range of sustainable forest schools throughout Ayrshire & Arran.

Level 3 training is expected to start in March 2011 with level 1 beginning in early June 2011. There are limited places still available on the level 3 course, please contact for further information.

The response, in particular to level 1 training has been excellent and we expect to confirm the 16 places in the near future.

Ayrshire FEI cluster member Rosie Mapplebeck has been actively pursuing her level 3 award. After attending 5 and a 3 day practical courses and a 2 day first aid training and 2 FEI good practice days, her forest school sessions have started in Cumnock. So far the children report feeling safer in the woods and having learnt new skills. Sessions involve gradual progression of confidence and practical skills using the resources in the woodland and practising tool skills in the classroom. The children are making their own video and photographic record. For some children this is a first exploration of their nearby park and for others the first time they have been allowed out in rain. That didnt deter them a bit from having fun in the woods and building dens, as you can see from the photos. (pics - Woodroad Park FS & Glasgow FEI good practice day).



Photographs of forest school in Templand Wood with Ayrshire Forest Cluster member Rosie Mapplebeck and Greenmill Primary, as part of her level 3 training in East Lothian.

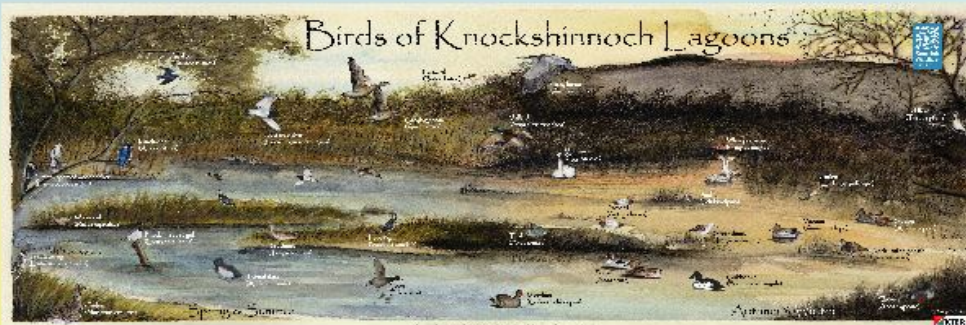


INTERPRETATION

Two new interpretation panels have been delivered for Templand Wood in Woodroad Park, one to show the features and species around the developing nature / learning trail and the other to interpret river life both above and below the surface.

We have recently upgraded the path network around Newmilns Nature site for the benefit of the school and community and a wildlife panel is ready for production for the site.

A birdlife interpretation panel is also in production for SWT Knockshinnoch Lagoons



WILLOW HARVESTING & GROUP VOLUNTEERING

We recently worked with a group from Doon Academy in starting this years willow harvest, which was an extremely enjoyable day. We are always looking for groups to help with the harvest and if time allows, this could also incorporate making some artist's charcoal or charcloth on the day.



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FOREST SCHOOL CLEARINGS DEVELOPMENT

We have secured part funding for a project to develop access and clearings in selected woodlands to compliment next years forest school training. We are hopeful that we will secure the rest of the funding to be able to develop 3 or 4 woodland education clearings around Cumnock & Doon Valley over the next few months.

TEMPLAND WOOD CHRISTMAS CRAFT STALL

FEI members ran a christmas craft stall in Templand Wood on saturday 27th November. a cold, snowy day was relaxed but steady and allowed us to promote the work of the Forest Cluster, with some of our own charcoal keeping us warm from the cast stove!



WOODLAND CRAFTS DEVELOPMENT

We have continued to develop traditional crafts for events, woodland education & promotion of old woodland management techniques such as;

- candle making & rushlights
- charcoal burning, artist's charcoal & charcloth for bushcraft
- willow structures & crafts
- green fencing & furniture

In addition to our established willow crop, we hope to develop facilities for steaming willow in the near future, a technique which provides basketmaking willow

We have been working with Kilmarnock college, who have been creating a range of rushlight holders to bring our traditional craft projects further to life in the future, following the successful creation of the small charcoal kilns.

FEI work has been promoted at several local talks including

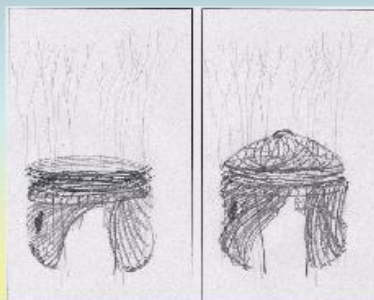
- Doon Academy
- Kilmarnock College
- Catrine History Society

WILLOW & MEADOW DEVELOPMENT

Following the successful first season for the Loudoun Hill wildflower meadow, we have harvested and re-sown the meadow with another wildflower mix and also yellow rattle to weaken the grasses.

We are hoping that we may be able promote wider use of the meadow as an educational facility next year for nature study and maybe some practical help with seed collection & harvesting.

We have a number of FEI willow projects planned but the recent heavy snow and freezing conditions has probably put the projects back until the new year. Following the successful public meadow, we are now looking for a suitable site to locate a more elaborate willow structure in a public area, using ash and hazel as stronger uprights rather than thick willow.



SNIPPETS

EAW / FEI have assisted Onthank Nursery in a funding bid to resurface the paths around Onthank community woodland. Part of the woodland will also be developed as a forest school clearing

There is a new FEI website at www.foresteducation.org

Penny Martin is the new part time forest school co-ordinator, based in Perthshire

Yipworld ran their 'survivor' overnight stay at Pinclanty Forest in July 2010

Several of the new carved waymarkers have now been installed along the trail in Templand Wood, woodroad Park

ARRAN UPDATE

'Roots of Arran Community Woodland' comprises 15 hectares of former forestry clearfell behind the main village Brodick, on the Isle of Arran. Now planted up with 1000s of saplings by volunteers over the last three years, which includes an orchard area, the committee hopes to set up a Forest Schools site as soon as possible. 'It's an exciting step in the right direction and I look forward to seeing youngsters enjoying the benefits of taking the curriculum outdoors and learning in a part of the island they've not yet discovered,' says committee member Juliette Walsh. Over the coming winter and spring the group will concentrate on improving the paths through the site to make it more accessible'.



Best wishes for the festive season and the New Year.

Mark.