

Trees for Hope Rewilding the Fertile Crescent

SC047707 OSCR Annual Report January - December 2025

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treesforhope.net

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Trees for Hope Trustees are

Alan Watson Featherstone : Chairperson

Dr. Philip Franses : Secretary

Bahar Ghafelehbashi : Treasurer

Minni Jain



A volunteer planting aspen trees in Moidart,
March 2025

Trees for Hope Objectives and Purposes

Our Vision and Mission are :

Restoring the Temperate Rainforest in Moidart on the West Coast of Scotland

🌲 Restoring healthy examples of the temperate rainforest ecosystems with their full complement of species and all age classes of native trees. All the essential ecosystem processes are functioning fully, and with all invasive non-native species removed - at Glenuig and other sites in Moidart.

🌲 Rewilding human relationships by welcoming the innate intelligence of the rainforest to guide the human activities and processes. Enabling the rainforest to have a foothold on the barren landscapes both on the land and within human relationships. Where the rainforest gains a foothold, the land rejuvenates and the desertified landscapes of both the ecosystem and humanity become lush again.

Rewilding the Fertile Crescent

🤝 Trees for Hope assists in the emergence of a bioregional network of ecovillages and communities engaged in rewilding themselves and their local ecosystems in the Wider Fertile Crescent area.

🤝 This is achieved by shared positive and practical ecological restoration work, drawing on local knowledge and wisdom.

🤝 We aid in removing the illusory barriers of separation, so a path will be revealed for the regeneration of the area and the restoration of its natural fertility.

🤝 We offer practical work to rejuvenate the land, accessing the experience of the existing networks of ecovillages and rewilding projects, which provide creative opportunities for healing the self, the history and cultural divides.

🤝 We create a bridge between the Wider Fertile Crescent and the rest of the world to allow for a healing exchange enabling love, peace and hope to be manifested.

Our Activities and Achievements in 2025

We have been quite productive this year with the following activities and projects to report on:

- Assisting in the film production of the documentary 'Hope' for the doctorate dissertation of Kelsey Grubbs, University of Edinburgh
- Holding a Rainforest Walk with the Irish author Eoghan Dalton in Glenuig
- Holding our Rainforest and Community Engagement Week (CREW) programme, 13-20 September in Glenuig.
- Trialing a glyphosate application with Roy Turnbull
- Wrote and sent our funding application to NatureScot for restoring the rainforests in Moidart over 10 years
- Fundraised to translate the book Language of Water to Farsi language (spoken in some countries in the Fertile Crescent)
- An exploratory journey to Tamera Community in Portugal to work with Aida Shibli, from Palestine, on her 'Watering Olive Trees' project



The founder, Pupak Haghighi, taking native oaks to Moidart for planting

'Hope' a documentary

Kelsey Deanne Grubbs had participated on our CREW programme in June 2024. As a doctorate candidate in anthropology at the University of Edinburgh she had interviewed a number of community residents in Glenuig. The documentary 'Hope' is part of her doctorate dissertation. She needed to return to Moidart to interview more people and build up the voices of the community in her documentary. We accompanied Kelsey in



Kelsey and David Stuart in Kinlochmoidart



March and assisted in her interviewing and filming a number of local residents.

Her completed documentary can be viewed on the link : [YouTube.com/watch?v=RXEHhzQryY8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXEHhzQryY8)

Kelsey tells our story as a charity. Our partnership with Glenuig Estate and collaboration with the local community is a symbiosis that could deliver effective work towards the restoration of the ancient rainforests in Moidart.

A Walk in the Forest with Eoghan Daltun

We were approached by the Irish author of the book 'An Irish Atlantic Rainforest', Eoghan Daltun, while he was on tour in Scotland for his research on Scottish restoration projects. He accepted my invitation to offer a public walk in the rainforests in Glenuig on the 2nd of August.

In the company of those who joined the walk, we learned about the inhabitants of the rainforests. Eoghan also pointed out that if these rainforests aren't restored by our present generation, not much of the forest will remain for the next generation of people to work with.

We compared the challenges and the opportunities for our work to restore the rainforests on both sides of the Irish Sea.



A walk in the rainforest with Eoghan Daltun, Glenuig

Community and Rainforest Engagement Week (CREW)

In September 13-20 we carried out another of our Community and Rainforest Engagement Week programmes in Glenuig.

We had the opportunity to stay at Samalaman House again, a historic building that was built as a Catholic seminary.

We work with Glenuig Estate and the community living in Glenuig and Roshven to advance our shared aims to protect and restore the rainforests on this part of Moidart. Our activities consist of removing the invasive non-native plant *Rhododendron ponticum*. We are also planting native trees as well as protecting the naturally regenerating ones from over-grazing by deer.

We had planned the activities of this week with the owner of the Glenuig Estate, Mr. Robert Clegg. We borrow the tools for our work from the charity Trees for Life, based in Glen Moriston. This adds extra pressure on us to travel to Glen Moriston before and after our work weeks. We would like to have our own tool sets and a tool shed to store the equipment we need to carry out our CREW programme with more ease.

We had a good turn out for our work week and managed to clear three hills on the Estate of the invasive plant. We also cleared a slope adjacent to 250 meters of the A861 road that goes from the Glenuig shop towards Kinlochmoidart, as well as a steep area next to the waterfall that marks the border between Glenuig Estate and West Roshven Estate.

Even though our achievements during our CREW week may be small compared to what needs to happen on the land in Moidart for the rainforests to recover, we consider our work at this stage as a seed, a pattern, for what needs to happen when up-scaled. We are learning how to tackle this most vigorous plant, *Rhododendron ponticum*, how to remove it effectively and efficiently from the land.

We have been fortunate to have Mr. Roy Turnbull joining us during our CREW week this year.

Community & Rainforest Engagement Week

September 13-20, 2025



Glenuig, Moidart

a week to

- restore the temperate rainforest
- be touched & restored by Nature
- live and learn in community



The week will be held by
Alan Watson Fearherstone & Pupak Haghighi

price range : £250 - £550



Preparing to hold our CREW programme with
Robert Clegg from Glenuig Estate



Removed *Rhododendron ponticum* from Glenuig
with their roots hanging in the air

Roy is a veteran *Rhododendron* remover from the area, having worked on the Ardnish peninsula during the 80's and ever since. He is also a chemist who knows how to handle the poisonous herbicide, glyphosate.

Glyphosate Trial with Roy Turnbull

We planned a trial date in October with Roy Turnbull and Robert Clegg. Mr. Clegg has previously done the training for glyphosate application. Roy brought our attention to a video by the officer in Killarney National Park, in County Kerry, Ireland. This officer, in charge of removing *Rhododendron ponticum*, used an axe instead of drills to access the cambium layer of the plant. We tried his method. We also used a blue dye, adding it to the glyphosate to mark where the herbicide has been applied.

We also trialed the corrosive alkaline substance, sodium hydroxide NaOH, also known commercially as caustic soda, on a few plants. We need to return to the sites and continue our observations and trials to learn more about how the plant responds to these substances.

NatureScot Nature Restoration Fund Application

We became aware of a Nature Restoration Fund opportunity with NatureScot in July. We put in our expression of interest application. Subsequently we were invited to put in a full application. We prepared our full application for restoring the whole of Moidart over 10 years, ie, our full vision. Preparing this application necessitated consultation with Loch Aber Mor, another organisation working in the same area, and an in-depth study and reflection on how this vision could be realised.

Later in 2026 we learned that our application had not been successful. Even though our first attempt to receive funding for the whole project was not granted, the exercise helped the charity to create a road map for realising our purposes, ie, restoring the whole of Moidart. In this sense the application process had been helpful to us to grasp how we could grow in order to revive the Atlantic rainforests in Moidart within ten years. We would start by building on the



Returning to previously cleared sites to remove any regrowth of the rhododendron is essential.



Learning to apply glyphosate to remove *Rhododendron ponticum*, Oct., 2025

relationship we already have with the Glenuig Estate and the local community, demonstrating how the rainforest in Glenuig could thrive once again with the help of volunteers we bring and the local community.

Rewilding the Fertile Crescent

A unique feature of Trees for Hope is our dual purposes. We envision and work towards the restoration of the rainforests in Moidart, while holding the vision for the recovery of the area known as the Fertile Crescent. Given the worsening of the socio-political dynamics, the war spreading on Iran, the painful genocide persisting in Gaza, we asked ourselves the question : how could we be effective in assisting the Fertile Crescent region to regenerate and recover?

A response from our charity has been to enable the translation of the book 'Language of Water', written by two of our Trustees to the Farsi language. Making this book available to readers in Iran and Afghanistan would enable us to speak the ancient and universal language of water.

Another project we started to investigate is the growing of olive trees in Palestine with the farmers of the land. The founder of the charity, Pupak Haghighi, had been having conversations about the project with her Palestinian friend Aida Shibli who lives in Tamera, Portugal. In November, the time of the olive harvest, she travelled to Portugal to assess the practicality of the project in the present moment. Olive trees are a great source of sustenance for the people and culture in Palestine. Indeed ensuring their continued existence on the land is a foundation for rewilding the Fertile Crescent. Presently this project exists as a seed. What



Fundraised for the translation of 'Language of Water' to Farsi



Harvesting olives in Tamera Community in Portugal.



Planting aspen trees in Moidart, December 2025

we can do right now is to hold the seed and prepare the field. This is what we have started to do in 2025.

The last tree-planting of the year

On the 16th of December we planted a number of aspen trees in Genuig to increase the biodiversity of the trees in the area. This was our last tree-planting of the year, celebrating a year of growing with our work in nature restoration in the West Coast of Scotland, and starting our outreach to the land and communities in the Fertile Crescent.

***Finances**

As outlined in the Accounts documents, this year we had an income of £3,132. Our expenditures come to a sum of £3,046. We are left with £86 at the end of this financial year.

*** Emerging Trends**

In 2025 a few trends have emerged for Trees for Hope which could become patterns on which the charity could grow along. Among these trends are :

In Moidart we have been

- Increasing the biodiversity of the native flora by planting the missing trees in Genuig.
- Working with interns and volunteers to deliver our mission in mutually beneficial relationships.
- Working with land-owners and communities to help them with their nature restoration projects.
- Working with similar organisations by sharing tools and expertise to deliver our projects.
- Receiving financial support from individuals and communities who wish to see our work flourish.

In the Fertile Crescent we have

- Reached out to individuals to seed restoration projects in Iran and in Palestine.

Annual report approved by Charity Chairperson

Alan Watson Featherstone

29th September, 2026

