

Community and Rainforest Engagement Week 22-29 June 2024, Roshven & Glenuig . Moidart



Trees for Hope

CREW Week 5, Report

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- Context

The Community and Rainforest Engagement Week (CREW) in June 2024 followed on from our April/May week of the same year. We picked up the projects, namely building two small sized fences, that were originally planned for the April/May week. The agenda of activities for this week included:

- * Building the two stock fences inside the oak wood, Aird Eanachaidh on the Glenuig Headland
- * Planting trees in Forsay, Roshven
- * Making more tree-guards around tree saplings in Aird Eanachaidh
- * Clearing rhododendrons around the A861 up from the shop towards Kinlochmoidart
- * Walking the land

- Who was present

Originally this week was designed to be a camping week. However, we adjusted our plans to stay in caravans in Forsay as our numbers accommodated this option best. We had two scholars and a young explorer, Robert Goodman who at a tender age in his 20's discovered a crab new to Western Science (see the picture at the last page).

From the local community, Pod, young David, and Robert and Yvonne joined us.

- What we did

We had already done the site preparation to build the stock fences. The idea for the small fences had come from Ian Cain, a local resident, who wished to observe the



differences between the open land and an enclosed space. Rob Pedley has helped with the design of the stock fences and the shopping list. Pod and Robert helped with transporting the material, including ferrying some on Pod's boat. With their expertise, Pod and Robert enabled the less skilled helpers like myself to build the structures. Building the stock fences looks like a simple project from the outside. However, building these structures were exercises in team work. The stock fences may become obsolete once a bigger fence is built around the perimeter of the oakwood. But building them proved to be an essential step in growing our collective project to protect this tiny yet magnificent woodland.

A comparable project we did during this week is building tree guards around the young saplings in the same woodland. This project is funded by Alan Watson Featherstone. Pod picked up the material in Fort William and delivered them in time, so we could put our hands to work. These smaller tree-guards too could become obsolete when a bigger fence is built around the woodland. In the meantime though they help to protect the young trees for as long as the construction of the bigger fence may need. I imagine that the bigger fence needs due



community consultation process and funding. I would like to think that Trees for Hope will be able to help with the funding of the larger fences, while the Glenuig Estate and the community would help with the mapping of a viable regenerative process for this beautiful landscape.

• Achievements

As well as building the fences mentioned already, our week saw us planting a grove of trees in Forsay caravan park. The purpose of this particular tree planting is to bring a greater biodiversity of trees to the area. We chose an area covered with bracken, indicating rich minerals in the soil. Indeed when the tall brackens were removed ancient lazy beds were revealed. The spot, chosen by Robert, was perfect for a grove to introduce a greater biodiversity of trees.

Planting the trees in rich soft soil is the easiest part of the work. The more demanding part is preparing the tree-guards, and driving the posts in the ground. Fortunately we had young and energetic volunteers on our team who made this task easier on the older folks like me. The older people in the team, like Alan, Robert and Pod, helped the younger ones with their expertise and knowledge. I find our intergenerational mixture of volunteers always a source of hope, but I may be biased.

The mixture of trees we planted in Forsay includes hawthorn, oak, hazel, wych elm, and Scots pine, grown by staff in the tree nursery on the nearby Isle of Eigg. Later on in March 2025 we added a number of aspen to the mix.

We could not have a CREW week without some rhododendron removal. We dutifully removed some rhodies along the A861 road from the shop towards Kinlochmoidart. Again our efforts at removing these pervasive plants feels like a drop in the bottomless ocean of rhododendrons. We could despair.



But I choose not to. Instead I am investing our energy in the persistent removal of the invasive plant. To be effective in the eradication of rhodies we need to unite! Local folks and voluntary groups like Trees for Hope need to work together on a removal plan. This plan needs to be incorporated in our next steps. I hope to be working on this together with the local community within the context of the wider Moidart landscape.

• Insights

One insight from the week for me was that our work very much depends on the intentions we invoke. Previously we had thought of a project that we called 'Listening to Glenuig.' It was about having a dedicated post so that we could hear the stories of the local people and learn about their desires, visions, and voices for the land and seascape. I see Trees for Hope as an enabling agent and the local community as the leader in regenerating this wonderful place. This post did not manifest the way we had envisioned because the funding application for it was not successful. However on our week, Kelsey who is doing her doctorate in Anthropology at Edinburgh University started interviewing on film a couple of people who were working with us. This has subsequently become a part of her final doctoral thesis. The project is still in the making. We realised that two voices are a good start but are not enough to speak for the place. We returned to Glenuig in March 2025 to interview more people. Kelsey calls this Part I of her film project. Should the right elements come together for her film and for our project, we hope there will be a Part II. Kelsey envisions a private screening of the film in Glenuig in September. Indeed, stories are all we are. It is up to us how we craft our stories in relation to landscape and to each other. We are very grateful to Kelsey and to our small team of CREW for this week for capturing the voices and stories of our friends in Glenuig and the area. It looks like that our intention with the 'Listening to Glenuig' project is manifesting, not in the ways we had imagined, but in surprising other ways.

Another insight from the week was given to us by Esther, one of the participants, who is studying for her masters in Aberdeen University. In our completion interview Esther told me that she cares for the recovery of the

landscapes in Scotland. For her this process is also tied in with social justice. The two processes goes hand in hand. She said her generation need to have their basic needs like housing, food, transport, etc met first before they could put their time and energy into landscape recovery. A fair point, I thought. A breakthrough process is needed to enable land regeneration, and to empower the helping hands for the land to have a footing for a home, and livelihood.

• Next Steps

Our week came to an end with a sense of having accomplished so much more than we had expected. Now that our week was over, new horizons lay ahead. How could we join the community in this beautiful part of the world to help one another in restoring the ancient rainforest, at a time when our planet is crying out for balance and healing? Perhaps a needed next step could be to ...

Oh, what could it be? I'll be grateful to hear from you what you think our next step should be.

