

P19 Glencanisp Nature Trail



Project Overview: (Please refer to LCAP or website)

The aim of this project was to construct a 450 metre long path which loops to the north of the lodge area, starting from the Arts building and finishing at the entrance track to the lodge. Walkers complete a circuit of the path learning about the nature of the area using the nature trail leaflet developed during the project. The path will be constructed to a width of 1.2 metres with an unbound dust surface. This type of path, although not truly all abilities, would mean that people with many varying abilities and levels of fitness are able to better appreciate and interact with the surrounding area.

Project lead organisation and other organisations involved: Assynt Foundation

Project Location: Glencanisp Lodge, Lochinver

Project dates: November 2016 – August 2021

Project Outputs

Measure	Target	Delivered	Notes
Construct Nature Trail	465m	483m	
Nature Trail Leaflet	1	1	Leaflet available in digital format on Assynt Foundation website.
Volunteer days	10	10	Our regular volunteer has pulled much R. ponticum and cut back brambles and bracken from encroaching onto the path. CALLP volunteers in the earlier years also weeded the path

Scheme Outputs

How has the project contributed to the CALLP Scheme Outcomes (please identify outcome and say how):

	1. The key features of the Coigach and Assynt Landscape will better understood and restored with a fit for purpose system in place to ensure the benefits are sustained.
	2. Where appropriate the connectivity and diversity of selected habitats will be mapped.
Y	3. Increased awareness and understanding amongst all individuals and groups of what makes Coigach and Assynt special and the threats to the unique heritage. <i>The new leaflet explains this</i>
Y	4. Important elements of the built, cultural and natural heritage will be recorded, improved, made publicly accessible and celebrated by the local community.

	<i>Path has become popular and increasing visitors to the lodge. Walkers get a fine view of the walled garden, Pole Barn, Art Studio and new and old deer larders as well as Suilven and much of Glen Canisp.</i>
	5. People will have gained new skills in researching, restoring and understanding their heritage.
	6. Collected data, information and interpretation will be more accessible in the public domain including posting on appropriate websites.
	7. Local groups and individuals understand, enjoy, value and take action in the Coigach and Assynt area in ways they did not at the outset.
Y	8. Increased access infrastructure at key strategic locations enabling people to enjoy the natural and cultural heritage of the area. <i>Path has become popular and increasing visitors to the lodge area. This new path slows folk down so they can take in the surrounding area and learn about it in the new leaflet.</i>
Y	9. Increased opportunities for informal recreation that promotes health and well-being benefits. <i>The new path is used regularly by dog walkers and makes a pleasing loop at the end of the drive. Used by active and less active walkers. When working in the garden one can notice people taking their time, admiring the fruit trees and sitting to take in the view.</i>

Reflecting on the last 5 years, what's the one thing that you're most proud of that has come from your project being part of CALLP?

The Trail to Glencanisp's Nature

Having a good quality footpath in a beautiful area which can be enjoyed by everyone away from cars. There is a great view from the path and because it goes near mature trees birds such as Greater Spotted Woodpecker, and young Tawny Owls can be seen.

What difference has this project made to the built, cultural and natural heritage of Coigach and Assynt?

Visitors gain greater knowledge of the area through the nature trail, leaflet and information boards in the honesty shop

What difference has this project made to People?

- Greater access to the landscape
- A shorter easier route, which is difficult to find among the mountains
- Greater accessibility as the path is made wide enough for prams and bikes

The Glencanisp nature trail is a lovely little hidden gem. Glen Canisp is truly an amazing place to be, and this little trail takes you up onto the hillside above Loch Druim Suardalain where you can see the stunning peaks of Canisp and Suilven rising above the treetops, while all around the wild flowers are full of bees and other insects. It's a lovely walk in any weather, but in the sunshine it's spectacular! I often jog from Lochinver village to the lodge at Glen Canisp, and this is the highlight of the run.

Useful Links

<https://coigach-assynt.org/2017/06/new-nature-trail-unveiled-assynt/>

<https://coigach-assynt.org/2019/05/may-monthly-volunteer-day/>

[New nature trail unveiled in Assynt | Scottish Wildlife Trust](#)

<https://youtu.be/HqmNF1dBhfM> YouTube video showing footage of Glencanisp Nature Trail

Future Plans and Legacy

- Continued maintenance of the path by Assynt Foundation
- Input to future access plan for the estate
- After Covid encourage school children back to see their fruit trees and examine the hibernaculum
- The area could be used in the Outdoor Learning programme

Lessons Learned

What are the three positive lessons gained from the scheme:

1. How much local people appreciate a new path
2. That a local team can make a good quality path
- 3.

What are the three negative lessons gained from the scheme:

1. Not really any apart from having somebody competent at our end to deal with the inevitable paperwork.
- 2.
- 3.

Funding Partners



Photographic Evidence



Opening of Glencanisp Nature Trail © Chris Puddephatt



Stunning views from the trail © Chris Puddephatt



Hibernaculum © Stuart Belshaw



Outdoor learning for primary children on the path © Kat Martin