

University of Manchester Environmental Conservation Volunteers: The Tree Musketeers

“All for one and one (planet) for all”

Background

2016 saw the formation of the 'Tree Musketeers' by the University of Manchester and a collection of student co-ordinators. The aim was to get enthusiastic planning and environmental management students practically engaged and volunteering, providing hands-on experience in a potential career field. These responsibilities have since been passed on to current second year students, thus ensuring the longevity of the initiative. The group works with a mixture of public and private sector organisations such as Manchester City Council, City of Trees and the Wildlife Trust to offer volunteering assistance, gain knowledge and help the environment.



Project

The group's work ranges from hands-on conservation work such as at Etherow Country Park's rhododendron clearance with Cheshire Wildlife Trust, to educational sessions with Moors to the Future surveying sphagnum moss in West Yorkshire. In addition, maintenance and management work is done with Manchester City Council at multiple sites across Manchester. For example, work was undertaken at Castle Hill and Painswick Meadows helping to enhance the sites of biological importance (SBI) and bring them into active conservation management. Working with Manchester City Council and the help of the Royal Horticulture Society, the Tree Musketeers have been given the chance to design and create their own long-term conservation project at Fog Lane Park in Didsbury aiming to improve the overall biodiversity of the greenspace.

**Citywide,
MANCHESTER**

BENEFITS



**Climate
Change &
Mitigation**



**Quality
of place**



**Land and
biodiversity**



Education

COST



TIMESCALE



Outcomes

Since its formation the Tree Musketeers have managed to gather over 40 members who are studying a variety of subjects, centered around environment and development. Almost fortnightly events gather on average 11 keen volunteers. The Tree Musketeers have helped to improve over eight sites, assisted the redevelopment of a growing area for Ashgate Primary School and are continuing to support City of Trees to achieve their mission to plant three million trees by 2025 (of which the Tree Musketeers have already planted over 700). *"The Tree Musketeers has brought us a new form of education – getting out, getting involved and making some great friends along the way"*. The group coordinator's continued efforts with the Tree Musketeers saw them receive the 'Making a Difference Trust's Outstanding Contribution to Environmental Sustainability' award in 2016.



Learning

Through participation in the Tree Musketeers programme the volunteers not only gain practical experience and skills but also get important insights into the fields of biodiversity and conservation, essential for ensuring a positive future for our planet. The project encourages collaboration and provides important insights into the practices of environmental organisations.

Future

The Tree Musketeers hope to continue into the future with the aim to become bigger and better. The range and variety of projects will hopefully continue to inspire students to get involved in practical conservation projects across Greater Manchester.

For further information

The Tree Musketeer Blog:

<https://uomtreemusketeers.wordpress.com/>

Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/uom_treemusketeers/

Information about Anna Gilchrist's award:

<http://www.socialresponsibility.manchester.ac.uk/get-involved/awards/meet-the-2016-winners/anna-gilchrist/>

