

## **Scouts Woodland Volunteering - 10 October 2021**

Hello, my name is Ned and I am a scout at 1st Churt scout group. I have been in the scouting movement for 8 years and I am working towards my Gold Award before I leave later this year. In this write up, I am going to tell you what some fellow scouts and I did to help restore parts of Churt woodland to its former glory.

We gathered on pond lane at 2 o'clock sharp, ready with our gloves and forks to aid us in that afternoons work. We were also joined by our leaders Carol and Sarah and Myra - the Churt scout treasurer and environmental councillor for the parish. We set off into the woods and came upon a part of woodland with not a lot of bracken on the floor but lots of fallen pine trees. We set up shop here and started to clear the forest floor and put all the trees and branches into large piles. We did this as it allows new shrubs to grow and creates homes for small animals such as reptiles, mice and hedgehogs. This allows the woodland to gain lots of biodiversity that has been lost over the past decades. After this rather hot work, we moved down the path to an area where lots of bracken had grown over the path and squeezed it to less than half a meter wide.

Here we would conduct an experiment; on one side of the path we would use secateurs to cut the bracken down and on the other side of the path we would pull the bracken out using our hands, in a years time we would come back and see which technique had worked the best at getting rid of the bracken. So we set about in the blazing sun clearing the bracken, I found that using my penknife's blade worked a lot better, although you did have to be careful that you didn't chop your finger off in the process. It was hot work clearing the path but we were successful in getting rid of as much bracken as we could. We did this as, although bracken is native to this country, it does prevent other shrubs and plant life from being able to grow which is not very good for the woods biodiversity. Once we had finished our clearing, we turned to regeneration. This was achieved by planting some trees kindly given to us by Carbon Footprint. I got to plant a White Beam sapling which is a very large tree and grows to its full height within around 30 to 40 years.

I felt good to get dirt under my fingernails again and I am proud to have helped Churt woods to be a part of restoring it to its former glory.

***Ned***